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## *THE GREAT HOUSE.*

*A STORY OF QUIET TIMES.*

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### CHAPTER XXI.

#### TOFT AT THE BUTTERFLIES.

BASSET'S view of Toft, if it did not hit, came very near the mark. For many years the man had served his master with loyalty. The relations between them had been such as were common in days when servants stayed long in a place and held themselves a part of the family. The master had been easy, the man had had no ambitions beyond those of his fellows, and no temptations except those which turned upon the cellar-book.

But a year before Mary Audley's arrival two things had happened. First the curate had fallen in love with Etruria, and the fact had become known to her father, to whom the girl was everything. Her refinement, her beauty, her goodness were his secret delight. And the thought that she might become a lady, that she might sit at the table at which he served had taken hold of the austere man's mind and become a passion. He was ready to do anything and to suffer anything to bring this about. Nor was he deceived when Etruria put the offer aside. She was nothing if not transparent, and he was too fond of her not to see that her happiness was bound up with the man who had stooped to woo her.

He was not blind to the difficulties or to the clergyman's poverty. But he saw that Colet, poor as he was, could raise his daughter in the social scale; and he spent long hours in studying

how the marriage might be brought about. He hugged the matter to him, and brooded over it, but he never discovered his thoughts or his hopes either to his wife, or to Etruria.

Then one day the sale of a living happened to be discussed in his presence, and as he went, solemn and silent, round the table he listened. He learned that livings could be bought. He learned that the one in question, with its house and garden and three hundred a year, had fetched a thousand guineas, and from that day Toft's aim was by hook or crook to gain a thousand guineas. He revelled in impossible dreams of buying a living, of giving it to Etruria, and of handing maid and dowry to the fortunate man who was to make her a lady.

There have been more sordid and more selfish ambitions.

But a thousand guineas was a huge sum to the man-servant. True, he had saved a hundred and twenty pounds, and for his position in life he held himself a rich man. But a thousand guineas? He turned the matter this way and that, and sometimes he lost hope, and sometimes he pinned his faith to a plan that twenty-four hours showed to be futile. All the time his wife who lay beside him, his daughter who waited on him, his master on whom he waited, were as far from seeing into his mind as if they had lived in another planet.

Then the second thing happened. He surprised, wholly by chance, a secret which gave him a hold over John Audley. Under other circumstances he might have been above using the advantage; as it was, he was tempted. He showed his hand, a sum of four hundred pounds was named; for a week he fancied that he had performed half his task. Then his master explained with a gentle smile that to know and to prove were two things, and that whereas Toft had for a time been able to do both, John Audley had now destroyed the evidence. The master had in fact been too sly for the man, and Toft found himself pretty well where he had been. In the end Audley thought it prudent to give him a hundred pounds, which did but whet his desire and sharpen his wits.

For he had now tasted blood. He had made something by a secret. There might be others to learn. He kept his eyes open, and soon he became aware of his master's disappearances. He tracked him, he played the spy, he discovered that John Audley was searching for something in the Great House. The words that the old man let fall, while half-conscious in the Yew Walk, added to his knowledge, and at the same time scared him. A moment

later, and Lord Audley might have known as much as he knew—and perhaps more!

For he did not as yet know all, and it was in the attempt to complete his knowledge that Mary had caught him listening at the door. The blow was a sharp one. He was still so far unspoiled, still so near the old Toft that he could not bear that his wife and daughter should learn the depth to which he had fallen. And John Audley? What would he do, if Mary told him?

Toft could not guess. He knew that his master was barely sane, if he was sane; but he knew also that he was utterly inhuman. John Audley would put him and his family to the door without mercy if that seemed to him the safer course. And that meant an end of all his plans for Etruria, for Colet, for them all.

True, he might use such power as he had. But it was imperfect, and in its use he must come to grips with one who had shown himself his better both in courage and cunning. He had imbibed a strong fear of his master, and he could not without a qualm contemplate a struggle with him.

For a week after his detection by Mary, he went about his work in a fever of anxiety. And nothing happened; it was that which tried him. More than once he was on the point of throwing himself at her feet, of telling her all he knew, of imploring her pardon. It was only her averted eyes and cold tone that held him back.

Such a crisis makes a man either better or worse, and it made Toft worse. At the end of three days a chance word put a fine point on his fears and stung him to action. He might not know enough to face John Audley, but he thought that he knew enough to sell his secret—in the other camp. His lordship was young and probably malleable. He would go to him and strike a bargain.

Arrived at this point the man did not hide from himself that he was going to do a hateful thing. He thought of his wife and her wonder could she know. He thought of Etruria's mild eyes and her goodness. And he shivered. But it was for her. It was for them. Within twenty-four hours he was in Riddsley.

As he passed the Maypole, where Mr. Colet had his lodgings, he noticed that the town wore an unusual aspect. Groups of men stood talking in the roadway, or on the doorsteps. A passing horseman was shouting to a man at a window. Nearer the middle of the town the stir was greater. About the saddler's door, about the steps leading up to the Audley Arms, and round the yard

entrance, knots of men argued and gesticulated. Toft asked the saddler what it was.

'Haven't you heard?'

'No. What's the news?'

'The General Election's off!' The saddler answered with an inflamed look. 'Peel's in again! And damn me, after this,' he continued, 'there's nothing I won't swallow! He come in in the farming interest, and the hunting interest, and the racing interest, and the gentlemanly interest, that I live by, and you too, Mr. Toft! And it was bad enough when he threw it up! But to go in again and to take our money and do the Radicals' work!' The saddler spat on the brick pavement. 'Why, there was never such a thing heard of in the 'varsal world! Never! If Tamworth don't blush for him and his pigs turn pink, I'm d—d, and that's all.'

Toft had to ask half a dozen questions before he grasped the position. Gradually he learned that after Peel had resigned the Whigs had tried to form a government; that they had failed, and that now Peel was to come in again, expressly to repeal the Corn Laws. The Corn Laws which he had taken office to support, and to the maintenance of which his party was pledged!

The thing was not much in Toft's way, nor his interest in it great, but as he passed along he caught odds and ends of conversation. 'I don't believe a word of it!' cried an angry man. 'The Radicals have invented it!' 'Like enough!' replied another. 'Like enough! There's naught they wouldn't do!' 'Well, after all,' suggested a third in a milder tone, 'cheap bread is something.' 'What? If you've got no money to buy it? You're a fool! I tell you it'll be the ruin of Riddsley!' 'You're right there, Joe!' answered the first speaker. 'There'll be no farmer for miles round 'll pay his way!'

At the door of Mr. Stubbs's office three excited clients were clamouring for entrance; an elderly clerk with a high bridge to his nose was withstanding them. Before the Mechanics' Institute the secretary, a superior person of Manchester views, was talking pompously to a little group. 'We must take in the whole field,' Toft heard him say. 'If you'll read Mr. Carlyle's tract on—' Toft lost the rest. The Institute readers belonged mainly to Hatton's Works or Banfield's, and the secretary taught in an evening school. He was darkly suspected of being a teetotaler, but it had never been proved against him.

Toft began to wonder if he had chosen his time well, but he was near The Butterflies and he hardened his heart; to retreat now



were to dub himself coward. He told the maid that he came from the Gatehouse, and that he was directed to deliver a letter into his lordship's own hand; in a moment he found himself mounting the shallow carpeted stairs. In comparison with the Gatehouse, the house was modern, elegant, luxurious, the passages were warm.

When he was ushered in, his lordship, a dressing-gown cast over a chair beside him as if he had just put on his coat, was writing near the fireplace. After an interval that seemed long to Toft, who eyed his heavy massiveness with a certain dismay, he laid down his pen, sat back, and looked at the servant.

'From the Gatehouse?' he asked, after a leisurely survey.

'Yes, my lord,' Toft answered respectfully. 'I was with Mr. Audley when he was taken ill in the Yew Walk.'

'To be sure! I thought I knew your face. You've a letter for me?'

Toft hesitated. 'I wished to see you, my lord,' he said. The thing was not as easy as he had hoped it would be; the man was more formidable. 'On a matter of business.'

Audley raised his eyebrows. 'Business?' he said. 'Isn't it Mr. Stubbs you want to see?'

'No, my lord,' Toft answered. But the sweat broke out on his forehead. What if his lordship took a high tone, ordered him out and reported the matter to his master? Too late it struck Toft that a gentleman might take that line.

'Well, be quick,' Audley replied. Then in a different tone, 'You don't come from Miss Audley?'

'No, my lord.'

'Then what is it?'

Toft turned his hat in his hands. 'I have information'—it was with difficulty he could control his voice—'which it is to your lordship's interest to have.'

There was a pregnant pause. 'Oh!' the young man said at last. 'And you come—to sell it?'

Toft nodded, unable to speak. Yet he was getting on better than he expected.

'Rather an unusual position, isn't it?'

'Yes, my lord.'

'The information should be unusual?'

'It is, my lord.'

Lord Audley smiled. 'Well,' he answered, 'I'll say this, my man. If you are going to sell me a spavined horse, don't! It will not be to your advantage. What's it all about?'

'Mr. Audley's claim, my lord.'

Audley had expected this, yet he could not quite mask the effect which the statement made upon him. The thing that he had foreseen and feared, that had haunted him in the small hours and been as it were a death's-head at his feast, was taking shape. But he was quick to recover himself, and 'Oh!' said he. 'That's it, is it? Don't you know that that's all over, my man?'

'I think not, my lord.'

The peer took up a paper-knife and toyed with it. 'Well,' he said, 'what is it? Come, I don't buy a pig in a poke.'

'Mr. Audley has found——'

'Found, eh?' raising his eyebrows.

Toft corrected himself. 'He has in his power—papers,' he said, 'that upset your lordship's case. I can still enable you to keep those papers in your hands.'

Audley threw down the paper-cutter. 'They are certainly worthless,' he said. His voice was contemptuous, but there was a hard look in his eyes.

'Mr. Audley thinks otherwise.'

'But he has not seen them?'

'He knows what's in them, my lord. He has been searching for them for weeks.'

The young man weighed this; and Toft's courage rose, and his confidence. The trumps were in his hand, and though for a moment he had shrunk before the other's heavy jaw he was glad now that he had come; more than glad when the big man after a long pause asked quietly, 'What do you want?'

'Five hundred pounds, my lord.'

The other laughed, and Toft did not like the laugh. 'Indeed? Five hundred pounds? That's a good deal of money!'

'The information is worth that, or it is worth nothing.'

'I quite agree!' the peer answered lightly. 'You're a wit, my man. But that's not saying you've a good case. However, I'll put you to the test. You know where the papers are?'

'I do, my lord.'

'Very good. There's a piece of paper. Write on one side the precise place where they lie. I will write on the other a promise to pay £500 if the papers are found in that place, and are of the value you assert. That is a fair offer.'

Toft stood irresolute. He thought hard.

My lord pushed the paper across. 'Come!' he said; 'write! Or I'll write first, if that is your trouble.' With decision he seized

a quill, held it poised a moment, then he wrote four lines and signed them with a flourish, added the date and read them to himself. With a grim smile he pushed the paper across to Toft. 'There,' he said. 'What more do you want, my man, than that?'

Toft took the paper and read what was written on it, from the 'In consideration of,' that began the sentence, to the firm signature 'Audley of Beaudelays' that closed it. He did not speak.

'Come! You can't want anything more than that!' my lord said. 'You have only to write, read me the secret, and keep the paper until it is redeemed.'

'Yes, my lord.'

'Then take the pen. Of course the place must be precise. I am not going to pull down Beaudelays House to find a box of papers that I do not believe is there!'

Toft's face was grey, the sweat stood on his lip. 'I did not say,' he muttered, the paper rustling in his unsteady hand, 'that they were in Beaudelays House.'

'No?' Audley replied. 'Perhaps not. And for the matter of that, it is not a question of saying anything. It is a question of writing. You can write, I suppose?'

Toft did not speak. He could not speak. He had supposed that the power to put his lordship on the scent would be the same as pulling down the fox. When he had said that the papers were in the house, that they were behind a wall, that Mr. Audley knew where they were, he would have earned—he thought—his money!

But he had not known the man with whom he had to deal. And challenged to set down the place where the papers lay, he knew that he could not do it. In the house? Behind a wall? He saw now that that would not do. That would not satisfy the big smiling gentleman who sat opposite him, amused at the dilemma in which he found himself.

He knew that he was cornered, and he lost his countenance and his manners. He swore.

The young man laughed. 'The biter bit,' he said. 'Five hundred pounds you said, didn't you? I wonder whether I ought to send for the constable? Or tell Mr. Audley? That would be wiser perhaps? What do you think you deserve, my man?'

Toft stretched out a shaking arm towards the paper. But my lord was before him. His huge hand fell on it. He tore it across and across, and threw the pieces under the table.

'No,' he said, 'that won't do! You will write at a venture

and if you are right you will claim the money, and if you are wrong you will have this paper to show that I bargained with you. But I never meant to bargain with you, my good rascal. I knew you were a fraud. I knew it from the beginning. And now I've only one thing to say. Either you will tell me freely what you know, and in that case I shall say nothing. Or I report you to your master. That's my last word.'

Toft shook from head to foot. He had done a hateful thing, he had been defeated, and exposure threatened him. As far as his master was concerned he could face it. But his wife, his daughter? Who thought him honest, loyal, who thought him a man! Who believed in him! How could he, how would he face them, if this tale were told?

My lord saw the change in him, saw how he shrank, and, smiling, he fancied that he had the man in his grasp, fancied that he would tell what he knew, and tell it for nothing. And twice Toft opened his lips to speak, and twice no words came. For at the last moment, in this strait, what there was of good in the man—and there was good—rose up, and had the better; had the better, reinforced perhaps by his hatred of the heavy smiling face that gloated upon him.

For at the last moment, 'No, my lord,' he said desperately, 'I'll not speak. You may do what you like.'

And before his lordship, taken by surprise, could interpose, the servant turned and made for the door. He was half-way down the stairs before the other had risen from his seat. He had escaped, he was clear for the time; and safe in the road he breathed more freely. But he had gone a hundred yards on his way before he remarked that he was in the open air, or bethought himself to put on his hat.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### MY LORD SPEAKS.

FOR a few happy moments Audley had certainly hoped that he was going to learn all that Toft knew, and to learn it for nothing. He had been baulked in this; but when he came to think over the matter he was not ill content with himself, nor with his conduct of the interview. He had dealt with the matter with presence of mind, and in the only safe way; and he had taught the man a lesson. 'He knows by this time,' he reflected, 'that if I am a lord, I am not a fool!'

But this mood did not last long, and it was succeeded by one less cheerful. The death's-head had never been wanting at his feast. The family tradition which had come down to him with his blood had never ceased to haunt him, and in the silence of night he had many a time heard John Audley at work seeking out the means to displace him. Even the great empty house had seemed to mock his pretensions.

But until the last month his fears had been vague and shadowy, and in his busy hours he had laughed at them. He was Lord Audley, he sat, he voted, the doors of White's, of Almack's were open to him. In town he was a personage, in the country a divinity still hedged him, no tradesman spoke to him save hat in hand. Then, lately, the traces which he had found in the Great House had given a shape to his fears; and within the last hour he had learned their solidity. Sane or mad, John Audley was upon his track, bent upon displacing him, bent upon ruining him; and this very day the man might be laying his hand upon the thing he needed.

Audley did not doubt the truth of Toft's story. It confirmed his fears only too well; and the family tradition—that too weighed with him. He sat for a long time staring before him, then, uneasy and restless, he rose and paced the floor. He went to and fro, to and fro, until by-and-by he came to a stand before one of the windows. He drummed with his fingers on the glass. There was one way, certainly. Stubbs had said so, and Stubbs was right. There was one way, if he could make up his mind to the limitations it would impose upon him. If he could make up his mind to be a poor man.

The window at which he stood looked on a road—a road of dignity, a little removed from the common traffic of the town. But the windows also, looking sideways, commanded a more frequented thoroughfare which crossed this street. His thoughts far away and sombrely engaged, the young man watched the stream of passers, as it trickled across this distant opening.

Suddenly his eyes recalled his mind to the present. He started, turned. In three strides he was beside the hearth. He rang the bell twice, the signal for his man. He waited impatiently.

'My hat and coat!' he cried to the servant. 'Quick, I'm in a hurry!' Like most men who have known vicissitudes he had a superstitious side, and the figure which he had seen pass across the end of the road had appeared so aptly, so timely, and had had so much the air of an answer to his doubts that he took it for an inspiration.

He ran down the stairs, but he knew that his comings and goings

were marked, and once outside the house he controlled his impatience. He walked slowly, humming a tune and swaying his cane, and it was a very stately gentleman taking the air and acknowledging with courtesy the respectful salutations of the passers, who came on Mary Audley as she turned from Dr. Pepper's door in the High Street.

He stood. 'Miss Audley!' he cried.

Mary was flushed with exercise, ruffled by the wind, travel-stained. But she would have cared little for these things if she could have governed the blood that rose to her cheeks at his sudden appearance. To mask her confusion she rushed into speech.

'You cannot be more surprised than I am,' she said. 'My uncle is not so well to-day, and in a panic about his medicine. Toft, who should have come into town to fetch it, was not to be found, so I had to come.'

'And you have walked in?'

Smiling, she showed him her boots. 'And I am presently going to walk out,' she said.

'You will never do it?'

'Before dark? No, perhaps not!' She raised her hand and put back a tress of hair which had strayed from its fellows. 'And I shall be tired. But I shall be much surprised if I cannot walk ten miles at a pinch.'

'I shall be surprised if you walk ten miles to-day,' he retorted. 'My plans for you are quite different. Have you got what you came to fetch?'

She had steadied herself, and was by this time at her ease. She made a little grimace. 'No,' she said. 'It will not be ready for a quarter of an hour.'

He rang Dr. Pepper's bell. An awestruck apprentice, who had watched the interview through the dusty window of the surgery, showed himself.

'Be good enough to send the medicine for Miss Audley to Mrs. Jenkinson's,' Audley said. 'You understand?'

'Yes, my lord! Certainly, my lord!'

She was going to protest. He turned to her, silenced her. 'And now I take possession of you,' he said, supremely careless what the lad heard. 'You are coming to The Butterflies to take tea, or sherry, or whatever you take when you have walked five miles.'

'Oh, Lord Audley!'

'And then I am going to drive you as far as the old Cross; and walk up the hill with you—as far as I choose.'

'Oh, but I cannot!' Mary cried, colouring charmingly, but whether with pleasure or embarrassment she could not tell. She only knew that his ridiculous way of taking possession of her, the very masterfulness of it, moved her strangely. 'I cannot indeed. What would my uncle say?'

'I don't know, and I don't care!' he replied, swinging his walking cane, and smiling as he towered above her. 'He may go hang—for once!'

She hesitated. 'It is very good of you,' she said. 'I confess I did not look forward to the walk back. But——'

'There is no—but,' he replied. 'And no walk back! It is arranged. It is time'—his eyes dwelt kindly on her as she turned with him—'it is time that some one took it in hand to arrange things for you. Five miles in and five miles out over dirty roads on a winter afternoon—and Miss Audley! No, no! And now—this way, please!'

She yielded, she could not tell why, except that it was difficult to resist him, and not unpleasant to obey him. And after all, why should she not go with him? She had been feeling fagged and tired, depressed, moreover, by her uncle's fears. The low-lying fields, the town, the streets, all dingy under a grey autumn sky, had given her no welcome.

And her thoughts, too, had been dun-coloured. She had felt very lonely the last few days, doubtful of the future, without aim; hipped. And now in a moment all seemed changed. She was no longer alone, nor fearful. The streets were no longer dingy nor dreary; there were still pleasant things in the world, kindness, and thought for others, and friendship and—and tea and cake! Was it wonderful that as she walked along beside my lord her spirits rose? That she felt an unaccountable relief, and in the reaction of the moment smiled and sparkled more than her wont? That the muddy brick pavement, the low-browed shops, the leafless trees all seemed brighter than before, and that even the butcher's stall became almost a thing of beauty?

And he responded famously. He swung his stick, he laughed, he was gay. 'Don't pretend!' he said. 'I see that you were glad enough to meet me!'

'And the tea and cake!' she replied. 'After five miles who would not be glad to meet them?'

'Exactly! It is my belief that if I had not met you, you would have fallen by the way. You want some one to look after you, Miss Audley.' The name was a caress.



Nor was the pleasure all their own. Great was the excitement of the townsfolk as they passed. 'His lordship and a young lady?' cried half Riddelsley, running to the windows. 'Quick, or you will miss them!' Some wondered who she could be; more had seen her at church and could answer. 'Miss Audley? The young lady who had come to live at the Gatehouse? Indeed! You don't say so?' For every soul in Riddelsley, over twelve years old, was versed in the Audley history, knew all about the suit, and could tell off the degrees of kindred as easily as they could tell the distance from the Audley Arms to the Portcullis. 'Mr. Peter Audley's daughter who lived in Paris? Lady-in-waiting to a Princess. And now walking with his lordship as if she had known him all her life! What would Mr. John say? D'you see how gay he looks! Not a bit what he is when he speaks to us! Wonder whether there's anything in it!' And so on, and so on, with tit-bits from the history of Mary's father, and choice eccentricities from the life of John Audley.

Mrs. Jenkinson's amazement, as she espied them coming up the path to the house, was a thing by itself. It was such that she set her door ajar that she might see them pass through the hall. She was all of a twitter, she said afterwards. And poor Jane and poor Sarah—who were out! What a miss they were having! It was not thrice in the twelve months that his lordship brought a lady to the house.

A greater miss, indeed, it turned out, than she thought. For to her gratification Lord Audley tapped at her door. He pushed it open. 'Mrs. Jenkinson,' he said pleasantly, 'this is my cousin, Miss Audley, who is good enough to take a cup of your excellent tea with me, if you will make it. She has walked in from the Gatehouse.'

Mrs. Jenkinson was a combination of an eager, bright-eyed bird and a stout, short lady in dove-coloured silk—if such a thing can be imagined; and the soul of good-nature. She took Mary by both hands, beamed upon her, and figuratively took her to her bosom. 'A little cake and wine, my dear,' she chirruped. 'After a long walk! And then tea. To be sure, my dear! I knew your father, Mr. Peter Audley, a dear, good gentleman. You would like to wash your hands? Yes, my dear! Not that you are not—and his lordship will wait for us upstairs. Yes, there's a step. I knew your father, to be sure, to be sure. A new brush, my dear. And now will you let me—not that your sweet face needs any ornament! Yes, I talk too much—but, there, there, when you are as old—'

She was a simple soul, and because her tongue rarely stopped she might have been supposed to see nothing. But women, unlike men, can do two things at once, and little escaped her twinkling spectacles. As she told her sister later, 'My dear, I saw it was spoons from the first. She sparkled all over, bless her innocent heart! And he, if she had been a duchess, could not have waited on her more elegant—well, elegantly, Sally, if you like, but we can't all talk like you. They thought, the dear creatures, that I saw nothing; but once he said something too low for me to hear and she looked up at him, and her pretty eyes were like stars. And he looked—well, Sally, I could not tell you how he looked!'

'I am not sure that it would be proper,' the spinster demurred.

'Ah, well, it was as pretty a thing as you'd wish to see,' the good creature ran on, drumming with her fingers on the lap of her silk gown. 'And she, bless her, I dare say she was all of a twitter, but she didn't show it. No airs or graces either—but there, an Audley has no need! Why, God bless me, I said something about the Princess and what company she must have seen, and what a change for her, and she up and said—I am sure I loved her for it!—that she had been no more than a governess! My dear, an Audley a governess! I fancied my lord wasn't quite pleased, and very natural! But when a man is spoons——'

'My dear sister!'

'Vulgar? Well, perhaps so, I know I run on, but gentle or simple, they're the same when they're in love! And Jane will be glad to hear that she took two pieces of the sultana and two cups of tea, and he watching every piece she put in her mouth, and she colouring up, once or twice, so that it did my heart good to see them, the pretty dears. Jane will be pleased. And there might have been nothing but seed cake in the house. I shall remember more presently, but I was in such a twitter!'

'What did she call him? Miss Sarah asked.

'To be sure, my dear, that was what I was going to tell you! I listened, and not a single thing did she call him. But once, when he gave her some cake, I heard him call her Mary, for all the world as if it was a bit of sugar in his mouth. And there came a kind of quiver over her pretty face, and she looked at her plate as much as to say it was a new thing. And I said to myself "Philip and Mary"—out of the old school-books you know, but who they were I don't remember. But it's my opinion,' Mrs. Jenkinson continued, rubbing her nose with the end of her spectacles, 'that he had spoken just before they came in, Sally.'

'You don't say so?' Sarah cried.

'If you ask me, there was a kind of softness about them both! Law, when I think what you and Jane missed through going to that stupid Institute! I am sure you'll never forgive yourselves!'

The good lady had not missed much herself, but she was mistaken in thinking that the two had come to an understanding. Indeed when, leaving the warmth of her presence behind them, they drove out of town, with the servant seated with folded arms behind them and Mary snugly tucked in beside my lord, a new constraint began to separate them. The excitement of the meeting had waned, the fillip of the unwonted treat had lost its power. A depression for which she could not account beset Mary as they rolled smoothly through the dull outskirts and faced the flat mist-ridden pastures and the long lines of willows. On his side doubt held him silent. He had found it pleasant to come to the brink; he had not been blind to Mary's smiles and her rare blushes. But the one step farther—that could not be re-trodden, and it was in the nature of the man to hesitate at the last, and to consider if he were getting full value.

So, as they drove through the dusk, now noiselessly over sodden leaves, now drumming along the hard road, the hint of a chill fell between them. Mary's thoughts went forward to the silent house and the lonely rooms, and she chid herself for ingratitude. She had had her pleasure, she had had an unwonted treat. What was wrong with her? What more did she want?

It was nearly dark, and not many words had passed when Lord Audley pulled up the horses at the old Cross. The man leapt down and was going to help Mary to alight, when his master bade him take the box-seat and the reins.

Mary remonstrated. 'Oh, don't get down, please!' she cried. 'Please! It is nothing to the house from here.'

'It is half a mile if it is a yard,' he said. 'And it is nearly dark. I am going with you.' He bade the man walk the horses up and down.

She ventured another protest, but he put it aside. He threw back the rug and lifted her down. For a moment he stamped about and stretched himself. Then 'Come, Mary,' he said. It was an order.

She knew then what was at hand. And though she had a minute before looked forward with regret to the parting, all her thought was now how she might escape to the Gatehouse. It became a refuge. Her heart, as she started to walk beside him,

beat so quickly that she could not speak. She was thankful that it was dark, and that he could not read her agitation in her face.

He did not speak himself for some minutes. Then 'Mary,' he began abruptly and looking straight before him, 'I am rather one for taking than asking, and that stands in my way now. When I've wanted a thing I've generally taken it. Now I want a thing I can't take—without asking. And I feel that I'm not good at the asking. But I want it badly, and I must do the best I can. I love you, Mary. I love you, and I want you for my wife.'

She could not find a word. When he went on his tone was lower.

'I'm rather a lonely man,' he said. 'You didn't know that, or think it? But it is true. And such an hour as we have spent to-day is not mine often. It lies with you to say if I am going to have more of them. I might tell you with truth that I haven't much to offer my wife. That if I am Audley of Beaudelays, I am the poorest Audley that ever was. That my wife will be no great lady, and will step into no golden shoes. The butterflies are moths, Mary, nowadays, and if I am ever to be much she will have to help me. But I will tell no lies, my dear!' He turned to her then and stopped, and perforce, though her knees trembled, she had to stand also, and face him as he looked down at her. 'I am not going to pretend that what I have to offer isn't enough. For you are lonely like me; you have no one but John Audley to look to, and I am big enough and strong enough to take care of you. And I will take care of you—if you will let me. If you will say the word, Mary?'

He loomed above her in the darkness. He seemed already to possess her. She tried to think, tried to ask herself if she loved him, if she loved him enough; but the fancy for him which she had had from the beginning, that and his masterfulness swept her irresistibly towards him. She was lonely—more lonely than ever of late; and to whom was she to look? Who else had been as good to her, as kind to her, as thoughtful for her, as he who now wooed her so honestly, who offered her all he had to offer? She hesitated, and he saw that she hesitated.

'Come, we've got to have this out,' he said bluntly. And he put his hand on her shoulder. 'We stand alone, both of us, you and I. We're the last of the old line, and I want you for my wife, Mary! With you I can do something, with you I believe that I can make something of my life! Without you—but there, if you say no, I won't take it! I won't take it, and I am going to have you, if

not to-day, to-morrow, and if not to-morrow, the next day! Make no mistake about that!

She tried to fence with him. 'I have not a penny,' she faltered. 'I don't ask you for a penny.'

Her instinct was still to escape. 'You are Lord Audley,' she said, 'and I am a poor relation. Won't you—don't you think that you will repent presently?'

'That's my business!' he cried. 'If that be all—if there's no one else——'

'No, there's no one else,' she admitted. 'But——'

'But be hanged!' he cried. 'If there's no one else you are mine.' And he passed his arm round her.

For a moment she stepped back. 'No! no!' she protested, raising her hands to push him off. 'Please—let me think.'

He let her be, for already he knew that he had won; and perhaps in his own mind he was beginning to doubt the wisdom of the step. 'My uncle? Have you thought of him?' she asked. 'What will he say?'

'I have not thought of him, and I am not going to think of him,' he cried grandly. 'I am thinking, my dear, only of you. Do you love me?'

She stood silent, gazing at him.

'Don't play with me!' he said. 'I've a right to an answer.'

'I think I do,' she said softly. 'Yes—I think—no, wait; that is not all.'

'It is all.'

'No,' she protested, between laughing and crying. 'You are not giving me time. I want to think. You are carrying me by storm, sir.'

'And a good way, too!' he rejoined. And then she did let him take her, and for a few seconds she was in his arms. He crushed her to him; she felt all the world turning. But before he found her lips, the crack of a whip startled them, the creak of a wheel sliding round the corner warned them, she slipped from his arms.

'You little wretch!' he said.

Breathless, hardly knowing what she felt, or what storm shook her, she could not speak. The wagon came creaking past them, the driver clinging to the chain of the slipper. When it was gone by she found her voice. 'It shall be as you will,' she said, gently, and her tone thrilled him. 'But I want to think. It has been so sudden, I am frightened. I am frightened, and—yes, I think I am

happy. But please to let me go now. I am safe here—in two minutes I shall be at home.'

He tried to keep her, but 'Let me go now,' she pleaded. 'Later it shall be as you wish—always as you wish. But let me go now.'

He gave way then. He said a few words while he held her hands, and he said them very well. Then he let her go. Before the dusk hid her she turned and waved her hand, and he waved his. He stood, listening. He heard the sound of her footsteps grow fainter and fainter as she climbed the hill, until they were lost in the rustle of the wind through the undergrowth. At last he turned and trudged down the hill.

'Well, I've done it,' he muttered presently. 'And Uncle John may find what he likes, damn him! After all, she's handsome enough to turn any man's head, and it makes me safe! But I'll go slow. I'll go slow now. There's no hurry.'

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### BLORE UNDER WEAVER.

GRATITUDE and liking, and the worship of strength, which is as natural in a woman as the worship of beauty in a man, form no bad imitation of love, and often pass into love as imperceptibly as the brook becomes a river. The morning light brought Mary no repentance. Misgivings she had, as what lover has not, were the truth told. Was her love as perfect as Etruria's, as unselfish, as absorbing? She doubted. But in all honesty she hoped that it might become so; and when she dwelt on the man who had done so much for her, and thought so well for her, who had so much to offer and made so little of the offering, her heart swelled with gratitude, and if she did not love she fancied that she did.

So much was changed for her! She had wondered more than once what would happen to her, if her uncle died. That fear was put from her. Toft—she had been vexed with Toft. How small a matter that seemed now! And Peter Basset? He had been kind to her, and a pang did pierce her heart on his account. But he had recovered very quickly, she reflected; he had shown himself cold enough and distant enough at his last visit! And then she smiled as she thought how differently her new lover had assailed her, with what force, what arrogance, what insistence—and yet with a force and arrogance and insistence to which it was pleasant to yield.

She did not with all this forget that she would be Lady Audley, she, whose past had been so precarious, whose prospects had been so dark, whose fate it might have been to travel through life an obscure teacher! She had not been woman if she had not thought of this; nor if she had failed, when she thought of it, to breathe a prayer for the gallant lover who had found her and saved her, and had held it enough that she was an Audley. He might have chosen far and wide. He had chosen her.

No wonder that Mrs. Toft saw a change in her. 'Law, Miss,' she remarked, when she came in to remove the breakfast. 'One would think a ten mile walk was the making of you! It's put a colour into your cheeks that would shame a June rose! And to be sure,' she continued, with a glance at the young lady's plate, 'not much eaten either!'

'I am not hungry, Mrs. Toft,' Mary said meekly. 'I drove back to the foot of the hill.'

'And I'd like to sort Toft for it! It's he who should have gone! He's upstairs now, keeping out of my way, and that grim and grey you'd think he'd seen a ghost! And 'Truria, silly girl, she's all of a quiver this morning. It's "Mother, let me do this!" and "Mother, I'll do that!" all because her reverend—not, as I tell her, that aught will ever come of it—has got a roof over his head at last.'

'But that's good news! Has Mr. Colet got some work?'

'Not he, the silly man!' Mrs. Toft rejoined. 'Nor likely! There's mighty little work for them as go against the gentry. For what he's got he's to thank Mr. Basset.'

'Mr. Basset?'

'To be sure,' Mrs. Toft answered, with a covert glance at the girl. 'Why not, Miss? Some talk and the wind goes by. There's plenty of those. And some say naught but do—and that's Mr. Basset. He's took in Mr. Colet till he can find a church. Etruria's that up about it, I tell her, smile before breakfast and sweat before night. And so she'll find it, I warrant!'

'It is very good of Mr. Basset,' Mary said gravely. And then, 'Is that some one knocking, Mrs. Toft?'

'It's well to have young ears!' Mrs. Toft answered. She took out the tray, and returned with a letter. 'It's for you, Miss,' she said. 'The postman's late this morning, but cheap's a slow traveller. When a letter was a letter and cost ninepence it came to hand like a gentleman!'

Mary waited to hear no more. She knew the handwriting, and



as quickly as she could she escaped from the room. No one with any claim to taste used an envelope in those days, and to open a letter so that no rent might mar its fairness called for a care which she could not exercise in public.

Alone, in her room, she opened it, and her eyes grew serious as they travelled down the page, which bore signs of haste.

'Sweetheart,' it began, and she thought that charming, 'I do not ask if you reached the Gatehouse safely, for I listened and I must have heard, if harm befel you. I drove home as happy as a king, and grieved only that I had not had that of you which I had a right to have—damn that carter! This troubles me the more as I shall not see you again for a time, and if this does not disappoint you too, you're a deceiver! My plans are altered by to-day's news that Peel returns to office. In any event, I had to go to Sea-bourne's for Christmas, now I must be there for a meeting to-morrow and go from there to London on the same business. You would not have me desert my post, I am sure? Heaven knows how long I may be kept, possibly a fortnight, possibly more. But the moment I can I shall be with you.

'Write to me at the Brunswick Hotel, Dover Street. Sweetheart, I am yours, as you, my darling, are

'PHILIP'S.

'P.S.—I must put off any communication to your uncle till I can see him. So for the moment, mum!'

Mary read the letter twice; the first time with eager eyes, the second time more calmly. Nothing was more natural, she told herself, than that her spirits should sink—Philip was gone. The walk with him, the talk which was to bring them nearer, and to make them better known to one another, stood over. The day that was to be so bright was clouded.

But beyond this the letter itself fell a little, a very little, short of her expectations. The beginning was charming! But after that—was it her fancy, or was her lover's tone a little flippant, a little free, a little too easy? Did it lack that tender note of reassurance, that chivalrous thought for her, which she had a right to expect in a first letter? She was not sure.

And as to her uncle? She must, of course, be guided by her lover, his will must now be her law; and it was reasonable that in John Audley's state of health the mode of communication should be carefully weighed. But she longed to be candid, she longed to be open; and in regard to one person she would be open. Basset had let her see that her treatment had cured him. At their last

meeting he had been cold, almost unkind ; he had left her to deal with Toft as she could. Still she owed him, if anyone, the truth, and, were it only to set herself right in her own eyes, she must tell him. If the news did nothing else it would open the way for his return to the Gatehouse, and the telling would enable her to make the *amende*.

The letter was not written on that day nor the next. But on the fourth day after Audley's departure it arrived at Blore, and lay for an hour on the dusty hall table amid spuds and powder-flasks and old itineraries. There Mr. Colet found it and another letter, and removed the two for safety to the parlour, where litter of a similar kind struggled for the upper hand with piles of books and dog's-eared Quarterlies. The decay of the Bassets dated farther back than the decline of the Audleys, and the gabled house under the shadow of Weaver was little better, if something larger, than a farm-house. There had been a library, but Basset had taken the best books to the Gatehouse. And there were in the closed drawing-room, and in some of the bedrooms, old family portraits, bad for the most part ; the best lay in marble in Blore Church. But in the parlour, which was the living-room, hung only paintings of fat oxen and prize sheep ; and the garden which ran up to the walls of the house, and in summer was a riot of colour, lay in these days dank and lifeless, ebbing away from bee-skips and chicken-coops. The park had been ploughed during the great war, and now pined in thin pasture. The whole of the valley was still Basset land, but undrained in the bottom and light on the slopes ; it made no figure in a rent-roll. The present owner had husbanded the place, and paid off charges, and cleared the estate, but he had been able to do no more. The place was a poor man's place, though for miles round men spoke to the owner bareheaded. He was 'Basset of Blore,' as much a part of Staffordshire as Burton Bridge or the Barbeacon. The memories of the illiterate are long.

He had been walking the hill that morning with a dog and a gun, and between yearnings for the woman he loved, and longings for some plan of life, some object, some aim, he was in a most unhappy mood. At one moment he saw himself growing old, without the energy to help himself or others, still toying with trifles, the last and feeblest of his blood. At another he thought of Mary, and saw her smiling through the flowering hawthorn, or bending over a book with the firelight on her hair. Or again, stung by the lash of her reproaches, he tried to harden himself to do something. Should he take the land into his own hands, and drain and fence and

breed stock and be of use, were it only as a struggling farmer in his own district? Or should he make that plunge into public life to which Colonel Mottisfont had urged him and from which he shrank as a shivering man shrinks from an icy bath?

For there was the rub. Mary was right. He was a dreamer, a weakling, one in whom the strong pulse that had borne his forbears to the front beat but feebly. He was not equal to the hard facts of life. With what ease had Audley, whenever they had stood foot to foot, put him in the second place, got the better of him, outshone him!

Old Don pointed in vain. His master shot nothing, for he walked for the most part with his eyes on the turf. If he raised them it was to gaze at the hamlet lying below him in the valley, the old house, the ring of buildings and cottages, the church that he loved—and that like the woman he loved, reproached him with his inaction.

About two o'clock he turned homewards. How many more days would he will and not will, and end night by night where he had begun? In the main he was of even temper, but of late small things tried him, and when he entered the parlour and Colet rose at his entrance, he could not check his irritation.

'For heaven's sake, man, sit still!' he cried. 'And don't get up every time I come in! And don't look at me like a dog! And don't ask me if I want the book you are reading!'

The curate stared, and muttered an apology. It was true that he did not wear the chain of obligation with grace.

'No, it is I who am sorry!' Basset replied, quickly repenting. 'I am a churlish ass! Get up when you like, and say what you like! But if you can, make yourself at home!'

Then he saw the two letters lying on the table. He knew Mary's writing at a glance, and he let it lie, his face twitching. He took up the other, made as if he would open it, then he threw it back again, and took Mary's to the window, where he could read it unwatched.

It was short.

'DEAR MR. BASSET,' she wrote, 'I should be paying you a poor compliment if I pretended that what I am writing will not pain you. But I hope, and since our last meeting, I have reason to believe that that pain will not be lasting.'

'My cousin, Lord Audley, has asked me to marry him, and I have consented. Nothing beyond this is fixed, and no announcement will be made until my uncle has recovered his strength. But I feel that I owe it to you to let you know this at once.'

'I owe you something more. You crowned your kindness by doing me a great honour. I could not reply in substance otherwise than I did, but for the foolish criticisms of an inexperienced girl, I ask you to believe that I feel deep regret.

'When we meet I hope that we may meet as friends. If I can believe this it will add something to the happiness of my engagement. My uncle is better, but little stronger than when you saw him.

'I am, truly yours,

'MARY AUDLEY.'

He stood looking at it for a long time, and only by an effort could he control the emotion that strove to master him. Then his thoughts travelled to the other, the man who had won her, the man who had got the better of him from the first, who had played the Jacob from the moment of their meeting on the steamer; and a passion of jealousy swept him away. He swore aloud.

Mr. Colet leapt in his chair. 'Mr. Basset!' he cried. And then, in a different tone, 'You have bad news, I fear?'

The other laughed bitterly. 'Bad news?' he repeated, and Colet saw that his face was white and that the letter shook in his hand. 'The Government's out, and that's bad news. The pig's ill, and that's bad news. Your mother's dead, and that's bad news!'

'Swearing makes no news better,' Colet said mildly.

'Not even the pig?' Basset sneered. 'If your—if Etruria died, and someone told you that she was dead, you wouldn't swear? You wouldn't curse God?'

'God forbid!' the clergyman cried in horror.

'What would you do then?'

'Try so to live, Mr. Basset, that we might meet again!'

'Rubbish, man!' Basset retorted rudely. 'Try instead not to be a prig!'

'If I could be of use?'

'You cannot, nor anyone else,' Basset answered. 'There, say no more. The worst is over. We've played our little part and—what's the odds how we played it?'

'Much when the curtain falls,' the poor clergyman ventured.

'Well, I'll go and eat something. Hunger is one more grief!' And Basset went out.

He came back ten minutes later, pale but quiet. 'Sorry, Colet,' he said. 'Very rude, I am afraid! I had bad news, but I am right now. Wasn't there another letter for me?'

He found the letter and read it listlessly. He tossed it across the table to his guest. 'News is plentiful to-day,' he said.

Colet took the letter and read it. It was from a Mr. Hatton, better known to him than to Basset, and the owner of one of the two small factories in Riddsley. It was an invitation to contest the borough in opposition to young Mottisfont.

'If it were a question, respected sir,' Hatton wrote, 'of Whigs and Tories we should not approach you. But as the result must depend upon the proportions in which the Tory party splits for and against Sir Robert Peel upon the Corn Laws, we, who are in favour of repeal, recognise the advantage of being represented by a moderate Tory. The adherence to Sir Robert of Sir James Graham in the North and of Lord Lincoln in the Midlands proves that there are landowners who place their country before their rents, and it is in the hope that you, sir, are of the number that we invite you to give us that assistance which your ancient name must afford.'

'We are empowered to promise you the support of the Whig party in the borough, conditioned only upon your support of the repeal of the Corn Laws, leaving you free on other points. The Audley influence has been hitherto paramount, but we believe that the time has come to free the borough from the last remnant of the Feudal system.'

'A deputation will wait upon you to give you such assurances as you may desire. But as Parliament meets on an early date, and the present member may at once apply for the Chiltern Hundreds, we shall be glad to have your answer before the New Year.'

'Well?' Basset asked. 'What do you think?'

'It opens a wide door.'

'If you wish to have your finger pinched,' Basset replied, flipantly, 'it does. I don't know that it is an opening to anything else.' And as Colet refrained from speaking, 'You don't think,' he went on, 'that it's a way into Parliament? A repealer has as much chance of getting in for Riddsley against the Audley interest as you have of being an archdeacon! Of course the Radicals want a fight if they can find a man fool enough to spend his money. But as for winning, they don't dream of it.'

'It is better to lose in some causes than to win in others.'

Basset laughed. 'Do you know why they have come to me? They think that I shall carry John Audley with me and divide the Audley interest. There's nothing in it, but that's the notion.'

'Why look at the seamy side?' Colet objected. 'I suppose there always is one, but I don't think that it was at that side Sir Robert looked when he made up his mind to put the country first

and his party second ! I don't think that it was at that side he looked when he determined to eat his words and pocket his pride, rather than be responsible for famine in Ireland ! Believe me, Mr. Basset,' the clergyman continued earnestly, 'it was no easy change of opinion. Before he came to that resolution, proud, cold man as I am told he is, many a sight and sound must have knocked at the door of his mind ; a scene of poverty he passed in his carriage, a passage in some report, a speech through which he seemed to sleep, a begging letter—one by one they pressed the door inwards, till at last, with—it may be with misery—he came to see what he must do !'

'Possibly.'

'The call came, he had to answer it. Here is a call to you.'

'And do you think,' the other retorted, 'that I can answer it more cheaply than Sir Robert ? So far as I have thought it out, I am with him. But do you think I could do this,' he tapped the letter, 'without misery—of a different kind it may be ? I am not a public man, I have served no apprenticeship to it, I've not addressed a meeting three times in my life, I don't know what I should say or how I should say it. And for Hatton and his friends, they would rub me up a dozen times a day.'

'*Non sine pulvere !*' Mr. Colet murmured.

'Dust enough there'll be ! I don't doubt that. And dirt. But there's another thing.' He paused, and turning, knocked the fire together. He was nearly a minute about it, while the other waited. 'There's another thing,' he repeated. 'I am not going into this business to pay out a private grudge, and I want to be clear that I am not doing that. And I'm not going into this simply for what I can get out of it. Ambition is a poor stayer with me, a washy chestnut. It would not carry me through, Colet. If I go into this, it will be because I believe in it. It seems as if I were preaching,' he continued awkwardly. 'But there's nothing but belief will carry me through, and unless I am clear—I'll not start. I'll not start, although I want to make a fresh start badly ! Devilish badly, if you'll excuse me !'

'And how will you—'

'Make certain ? I don't know. I must fight it out by myself—go up on the hill and think it out. I must believe in the thing, or I must leave it alone !'

'Just so,' said Mr. Colet. And prudent for once he said no more.

(To be continued.)

## THE OLD CONTEMPTIBLES.<sup>1</sup>

### AMMUNITION SUPPLY.

BY BOYD CABLE.

THE farm where the Divisional Ammunition Column was billeted and bivouacked was far enough from the line to be out of any but the longest shell range, but near enough to allow the growling rumbling thunder of the guns to be heard very distinctly. As was usual in those early months of the war, the air was very full of rumours, but very empty of real information, and back in the Column men knew little of how the battle on their front was running. The rise and fall of the gun-fire told certainly of the sinking or swelling intensity of the fight, and there was an ominous certainty as time wore on that the noise of the battle-line was coming closer and closer, that, in other words, our line was being forced steadily back. The Column had some confirmation of this fact in the word brought back from time to time by the men they had stationed up front to bring back the requisitions for ammunition, and from those who trekked the shells up to the guns.

The sections of the Column which supplied the 18-pounder batteries only took up their loads as far as the Brigade Ammunition Column, which again carried it on to the batteries; but one section which handled the ammunition for the Heavies and Hows. (60-pounders and Howitzers) took their waggons right up to the battery lines close behind the guns, and the men of this section especially were able to bring back a good deal of information of how affairs were going, and a great deal more of rumour and what they heard from all sorts of combatants and casualties.

The sum total of fact and rumour was that the line was 'having a thick time,' that it was being attacked fiercely by heavily outnumbering forces, and—this being of especial as it was of professional interest to the Column—that our forces were completely out-gunned, and were not able to return one shell to the Germans' score. The reason for this last too was not only that the enemy had many more and heavier guns, but that they appeared to have an unlimited supply of shells for them, while our guns were kept rigorously down to a slow rate of fire to husband the scanty ammunition.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in the United States of America by Boyd Cable, 1919.



This was the position of affairs when a couple of waggons returned to the Column in charge of an N.C.O., who bore a requisition for a further supply of ammunition and an urgent note asking that it should be sent with the least possible delay. The non-com. who delivered the note to his C.O. knew well what the contents were, and when he rejoined his fellows he passed the word that they'd better have the next teams for duty standing by, as they'd be getting orders next minute to take their loads up in the worst kind of a hurry. His remark did not create the bustle he expected, and the other non-coms. explained briefly, 'There's no orders to turn out comin' yet. There's not a round in the section.'

The first man gaped at them. 'Not a round!' he repeated in amazement. 'What's happened? I didn't meet any of our other waggons going up.'

'You didn't,' he was told, 'because none have gone. You took the last loads we had, and there's nothing come from the Park since. The Old Man has sent about half a dozen urgent chits back to them to shove along some stuff; but none's come.'

A couple of hours later a messenger splattered up the wet road, swung off his steaming horse, and hurried in to his C.O. He too bore an urgent note asking for immediate supplies, to which the O.C. Section, after a brief consultation with the Adjutant, sent a reply that there were no shells in the Column and that they would be rushed up the moment they came in from the Park. And one more urgent note was sent back to the Park.

Later again the captain commanding the Brigade Column came pounding in. He too hurried to the Adjutant and the O.C. Column, and emerged from his interview red-faced and stamping with anger and impatience. Before returning to his own Column he had a talk to one of the Section Commanders, and expressed himself rather freely on the slackness or indifference of the Park. 'Here's the line getting blown to ribbons,' he said hotly, 'and guns pounded to pieces; and we can't attempt to keep down the fire because we haven't shells enough. And all the urgent chits I get and pass back to you don't bring up a round, because the confounded Park don't send it. Pretty state of affairs, isn't it? A whole Divisional Ammunition Column without a blessed round to its name for over half a day in the middle of a hot action. It's scandalous. It's . . .'

'It's all that, old man,' said the O.C. Section. 'But the best

I can do is to promise you'll get the stuff up just as quick as we can rush it—when it comes.'

Every man in the Column knew by now how matters stood and they also had scorching remarks to pass on the Park. Late in the afternoon one of the Park officers slithered in on a motor cycle, visited the Adjutant, and departed again. The word filtered round and down to the men presently that they might expect the Park lorries in almost any time, so that no one was surprised when orders were issued to stand by, to be ready to rush the transference of the ammunition from lorries to waggons and be off with it to the front the moment it arrived.

Each section officer went round with his N.C.O.'s and saw that these orders were carried out to the last possible detail, and took the opportunity of impressing on the men that if they weren't loaded and away before any other section had a wheel moved—!!! But there was little need to urge the men, because they knew only too well what the line was undergoing for lack of shells, and they were just as anxious as their officers to get the ammunition up at the first minute possible. Everything possible was done to cut out any waste of time in getting on to the road when the Park lorries came. The horses were harnessed and the teams hooked in to the empty waggons and kept standing there, the men hung about, the drivers booted and spurred and leg-ironed, the gunners detailed in batches and ready to rush the loading work. All the rest of the afternoon they waited, grumbling and fidgeting, staring down the empty road for any sign of the lorries, turning to listen to the grumbling roll of the guns. At sun-down the teams were taken out one at a time, each one led to the watering place and scantily watered, brought back and hooked in before the next was unhooked for watering. The men had their tea in batches, eating and drinking hastily, squatted about in the barns and sheds out of the rain, but ready to jump and run at the first warning shout of the lorries' approach.

But tea was finished and the water and feed finished, and still there was no sign of the lorries. The men waited about in the gathering dusk, and on into the darkness, talking and grumbling, guessing and speculating, falling to silence every now and then, and listening to the steady gun-fire.

Two or three mounted messengers splattered and squelched in during the evening, but after delivering and receiving notes departed as hastily as they had come and without any time to

impart to the Column men a tithe of the news they so desperately wanted to hear.

'They're gettin' hell up there,' one man paused long enough to say. 'Rush that stuff up when it comes.'

'My oath!' 'We'll break records.' . . . 'Tell the boys there we're comin' at the trot, canter an' gallop first minute we can,' the men shouted after him as he moved off.

Another of the messengers stayed to change his saddle to a fresh horse, and he swallowed tepid tea and answered a few more questions. His news was still more depressing. 'Some of the batteries is down to limber supply,' he said, 'an' been dolin' out the last rounds like they was diamonds. . . . We lost some villages again I heard; an' one a battalion o' the Jocks lost an' took again wi' the bayonet an' was just about wiped out. We're killing Germans in millions, the inf. doin' it all because we can't support proper. But the faster the *soors* are killed, the more of 'em comes swarmin' on. Yes, some o' the batteries has copped it bad. . . . Yes, our Brigade's too.'

One of the men asked anxiously if there was any word of a certain battery. 'Hundred an' teenth,' said the messenger, preparing to mount. 'Haven't you heard o' them? Wiped out solid—every man an' gun blown to bloody rags.'

There was a chorus of growls and low oaths, and the man who had asked the question said dazedly, 'Hundred an' teenth. You sure?'

'Sure enough,' said the messenger and swung to the saddle. 'That was yesterday I heard that. Blown to bloody rags,' and he moved off.

The other man stared after him a moment. 'I'd two brothers in the Hundred an' teenth,' he said slowly, and that was all.

It was nearly midnight when word came from the Park again that the lorries could not arrive before daybreak next morning, and the men were told they could turn in 'all standing' and dressed to boots and spurs ready to jump out in a hurry. The teams were unhooked and the horses led to their extemporised stables in sheds or rough shelters of hop-poles covered with branches and sacking. But even after they got permission to turn in many of the men lingered, talking, and listening to the roar of battle and watching the gun flashes flickering and jumping beyond the horizon, and trying to gauge whether the sounds and lights were nearer or farther. And when they did turn in, some of the gunners, rather

than risk the delay of a call and few minutes' run from their billets, slept in the empty waggons or under them on the wet ground.

Long before daybreak every man was astir and out, had breakfasted hurriedly, and was ready waiting. Most of them carried their mess-tins of tea and their food to some place in the barn doorways or under the eaves, where they could eat and still keep an eye on the road down which the lorries would come. The teams were brought out and hooked in again, being taken one at a time as overnight to water, and the nosebags hung on them after they were hooked into their places in the waggons.

Daybreak came slowly—a wet, grey, drizzling day. More messages came from forward, came by messengers angered by black bitterness, filled with anguishing tales and rumours of broken battalions shelled piecemeal from their ground, of batteries sitting helpless and unable to reply to the torrents of shells that swept them and the infantry; a string of ambulance motors came and passed the end of the Column's road, moving with the slow careful driving that speaks always so eloquently of the loads they bear.

But no lorries came from the Park.

By noon the men's excitement had risen to a restless wrath. They failed utterly to understand or argue out a solution of the mystery. There were the guns up front idle for want of shells; there were the infantry getting wiped out for want of artillery support; there were they sitting waiting with the teams hooked in ready to rush the stuff up; and the Park lorries didn't come. It was beyond them. The Park had been given wrong orders, surmised some, and had sent the stuff to the wrong place; or some fool had led the convoy wrong and they were wandering round France searching for the Column; or perhaps the Park hadn't got the shells to send. But this last idea was scouted. In those days the batteries of a Brigade were supplied by the Brigade Columns, the Brigade Columns of a Division by the Divisional Columns, the Divisional Columns by the Ammunition Park. Beyond this the men knew little and vaguely of supplies from base and home, but the knowledge they had made it plain that if the Park had no shells neither had the Divisional Columns, and . . . As one gunner said, 'If the Park has no ammunition left, it's *mafeesh* the war—after we're *mafeesh*.'

'It's bad enough,' said another. 'We've sent nothing up for a full day, an' there can hardly be a ruddy round left wi' the

guns o' the whole Division. Poor bloomin' inf. in this bloomin' Div. anyhow.'

At noon horses and men were fed again in the same fashion as before, and the men fell back on their fretful watching for the lorries, their apprehensive listening to the gun-fire that in the last few hours seemed to have grown stronger and louder and nearer.

Then at 3 o'clock there came a yell from some men down the road—a triumphant yell and a rising cheer. 'The lorries—the lorries!' The word ran from mouth to mouth; the cheers rose until a shrill blast of a whistle cut them short. In an instant the road was a bustle of activity, the drivers tightening girths, the gunners flinging off their wet coats and swarming round their waggons.

Only one lorry had appeared yet, and it slithered and scrunched cautiously up the rough side road, half a dozen men running alongside and shouting directions and questions at the driver and an officer sitting beside him. As they saw the gunners pointing and the lorry swing down the side road that led to their waggons the men of No. 4 Section broke into yelling cheers.

'First load to us—here y'are—this way, No. 4.'

'Save your wind, men,' advised the section officer. 'The lorries for No. 3 would have turned off before they came this far. They may be loading up now. We've got to get away first, remember. On to this lorry, the lot of you. The others'll be here before this is clear.'

The lorry lurched in to the side of the road and halted, and before it had stopped the men were on it and swarming in over the tail-board. There was an amazingly scanty load on board, but without stopping to consider this the men fell on the boxes like starving wolves upon red meat, jerked the tail-board clear, and began to swing the boxes out.

The Section Commander was standing on the step talking to the Park officer, who was fumbling under his coat for papers. 'My Lord,' said the section officer, 'you fellows haven't hurried yourselves, have you? Never mind, now you're here. Let's have your papers and sign. We'll off-load you in a wink. What you brought? Heavies, I hope? They want it most.'

A fierce yell from inside the lorry interrupted him, and next instant his sergeant was out and round beside him. 'There's something wrong, sir,' he almost shouted, 'nothing there but six boxes of Four-five, and a lot of fuses and revolver ammunition.'

'I'm afraid you'll find this rather a sell, old man,' said the Park officer wearily. 'There's just about what he says there is.'

The section officer dropped back off the step. 'For God's sake,' he stammered, 'what d'you mean? When—where—where's the rest?'

The other clambered stiffly down. 'Where's your Adjutant?' he said. 'I've a note for him. No, there's no more coming.'

'What about the other sections?' asked the Section Commander eagerly. 'Have you brought any 18-pounder for them?'

'Not a round,' was the blunt reply. 'Ah, here's the Adjutant; and your C.O., isn't it?'

'Yes; looking for you, I fancy. I'll push off back and unload your measly handful of stuff,' and he turned again to the lorry.

'This driver, sir,' said his sergeant, jerking a head towards the lorry, 'he tells me "—sinking his voice—" there's no more coming up, 'cos there isn't a blessed round left in the whole of the Park. D'you think, sir—'

'Not much use thinking,' said the section officer bitterly. 'Get it off-loaded one-time. We have to send a batch of men to the batteries to-night to replace casualties, and this handful can go with them. Won't the batteries say something when they see it too.'

'Don't it sound as if the gun-fire was slacking off, sir?' said the sergeant. 'I've been listening—'

'If it is,' said the officer, 'it means one of two things. Either we've stood 'em off again, or they've swamped the front line. And without artillery support and with that weight of gun-fire against them we can't blame the poor old inf. if they have been run over. Anyhow, I fancy we'd better get things ready to pack up and trek in case we get orders to move. And we'll have a rifle inspection this afternoon, and see every man has his bandolier full. If we can't help the line with shells, perhaps they'll let us wade in and be useful with what rifles we've got. It may come to it too.'

He spoke bitterly, but no more bitterly than he felt, and no shade more than the men spoke and thought. They were kept on the rack for the rest of that day, standing by their waiting teams, hoping and watching and praying for sight of the loaded lorries rolling up the road, listening to the roll and roar of the distant battle, speculating on its varying cadences, imagining, or rather

knowing, the inferno the line was enduring, grudging and resenting blackly and bitterly their own inaction and inability to help.

It was not until days after that they learned, patchily and scantily as usual, the result of the action, the tale of the German attack dying away just when one more push against our weakened line, left practically without artillery support, must have succeeded; the old story of the Germans who had practically won and didn't know it, of the British who were practically beaten and *would* not know it. But that knowledge only came to the Column later, and on that second afternoon they were still 'standing by,' waiting and hoping against hope for supplies, when the Brigade Column Commander came back to them again.

He found one of the Section Commanders waiting by the roadside as he came past, and stopped, dismounted, and talked with him a little, the rumble and bump of the guns forming a background to their talk.

The talk was bitter enough and gloomy enough.

They spoke of the punishment the line was enduring, of the horrible fix the army was in if this shortage of shells meant, as it evidently must, the exhaustion of home supplies; and then they paused to listen to another prolonged roar of gun-fire that beat gustily back to them.

'It's rather funny,' said the Column Captain slowly, 'to think of this fix we're in now, and that it's only a few months ago that some people were raving and fighting against Army Estimates and expenditure, and arguing that we'd spent enough, that we were as prepared as we need be, that we were ready for war.' He paused and laughed shortly and repeated, 'Ready for war! It's rather a joke.'

Again the gun-fire rose, rumbling and roaring and bellowing. One might easily have imagined that the guns—the German guns—were shaking themselves with hoarse Titanic laughter over that joke.



### HORATIA : A NEW NELSON THEORY.

[*Note*.—Unquestionably child substitution was, when the meshes of the law were wider, much more extensively practised than now, and even in these days, given sufficient motive, the feminine mind does not hesitate to make the attempt, as is abundantly proved by the Slingsby legitimacy case of a short time ago.

Between that case and the one which is the subject of this article I ask the reader to draw a parallel. In both cases the putative father was passionately fond of children and at a distance at the time of supposed birth, and various other similarities may be noted.]

MISS MOORHOUSE in her history of Nelson's Lady Hamilton incorporates two remarkable letters, lately unearthed, from Horatia Nelson (Mrs. Ward) to Sir Harris Nicolas.

In the more remarkable of the letters she gives her reason for not believing Lady Hamilton to be her mother. She relates that after Nelson's death, when they were living at Richmond, Lady Hamilton had occasion to correct her for some childish fault. She did so in such exaggerated terms that Mrs. Cadogan (Lady Hamilton's mother) remonstrated.

'By all the fuss you are making she might be your own child,' she said.

'Perhaps she is,' was the reply. Mrs. Cadogan thereupon remarked, 'That won't do with me, Emma; I know better.'

Miss Moorhouse dismisses this incident very lightly. She seems to think that the 'Thompson' letters are conclusive as to the parentage of Horatia Nelson Thompson.

These 'Thompson' letters were written by Nelson under the *alias* of Thompson, or pretending there was a seaman in the Fleet of that name who was expecting news of the birth of a child from Lady Hamilton, to be conveyed to him by Nelson. There is also another letter sent personally by a seaman named Oliver, in which all disguise is laid aside, thanking Lady Hamilton for this 'Dear pledge of love,' and 'that she had never given one to anybody else.' Which proves, says Miss Moorhouse, that Nelson was very much in the dark as to the fair Emma's antecedents, as she had at least one child by Sir Harry Featherstonhaugh.

But these letters prove nothing, except that Nelson 'thought'

himself Horatia's father, and to adapt a well-known saying 'it is a wise father who knows his own child.'

As to Mrs. Ward, till the last moment of her life she never believed herself to be the child of Lady Hamilton, though apparently still believing Nelson to be her father.

All writers on Nelson are agreed in fixing Horatia's birth on or about January 31, 1801.

Nelson joined the fleet at Southampton on January 13, and was not in London again for about three weeks, when, eager parent, he is supposed to have rushed up from Southampton to see the child.

At any rate on February 20, Lady Hamilton wrote to Mrs. William Nelson, Nelson's sister-in-law, that she was not able to have the Prince Regent to dine at her new house in Piccadilly as she was too unwell.

This was *apropos* of a wish that the Prince Regent (afterwards George IV.) had expressed to hear Lady Hamilton sing with the opera singer, Madame Banti. Nelson was absurdly alarmed at the idea of his charmer being brought into contact with the First Gentleman in Europe, even going so far as to wish the Regent deaf, and his dearest Emma dumb, rather than the meeting should take place.

Lady Hamilton, seeing how violently he was opposed to the idea, seems to have calmed him by promising that if the Prince Regent insisted on coming, she would go out of the house rather than suffer it. He evidently feared that the former might wish to play Louis XV. to Lady Hamilton's Pompadour. That had been prophesied by ill-natured English people at Dresden, but, fortunately for our morals as a nation, never took place. She no doubt pleaded illness as stated above.

Between January 13, when Nelson rejoined his ship at Southampton, and February 20, the date of the letter to Mrs. W. Nelson, little over five weeks, all the following events are supposed to have taken place.

Sir William and Lady Hamilton removed to a new house, No. 3 Piccadilly.

Lady Hamilton sold her diamonds and entirely refurnished and decorated her new home, which was in the grandest style, with a separate carriage for herself and Sir William. All must have been in perfect order about February 7, or the Prince would not then have proposed his visit.

After the time of the Prince's first intimation, a series of

letters passed between Sir William Hamilton and Nelson, principally on the subject of the Prince's proposed visit.

In little over five short weeks, or if we reckon to February 7 but three and a half, all this business is accomplished, and in addition Lady Hamilton is supposed to have given birth to Horatia without the knowledge of her husband or her mother, Mrs. Cadogan, who was constantly with her!!! This, as our American cousins would say, is a very 'tall order.'

An old and half-blind husband might perhaps be easily deceived by such a clever intriguer as Emma, even if a birth really took place : but not so Mrs. Cadogan. Her position in the household was that of housekeeper, cook, and personal attendant on her daughter ; in other words, she waited on her daughter hand and foot and was consulted in everything. Emma could throw dust in many people's eyes, but not in her mother's. It was absolutely impossible that Lady Hamilton should have a child and her mother not know of it.

Miss Moorhouse is constrained to squeeze the whole business of the birth, and the surreptitious taking of the child to Nurse Gibson (with whom she was placed for the first two or three years of her life) into the space of one week.

Well might Mrs. Cadogan say 'That's no good with me, Emma ; I know better.'

Let us examine the credibility of the actors in this little domestic scene at Richmond. Mrs. Cadogan was an even more remarkable woman in some ways than her daughter, and with much greater strength of character. The wife of a country blacksmith, who at her child's baptism made 'her mark,' she gained the esteem of fastidious men of the world like Greville and Sir William Hamilton ; she was treated with marked respect by Queen Maria Carolina, the sister of Marie Antoinette, and Nelson in one of his letters says 'I love Mrs. Cadogan.' She had been with her daughter continuously from the time of her connection with Greville till her death, with the exception of a short time in Sicily.

Her daughter could not possibly have had a child without her knowing it. Miss Moorhouse admits that, but does not attempt to reconcile the incongruity of Mrs. Ward's statement. Such a woman as Mrs. Cadogan was not likely to tell a 'silly' lie. If Horatia were really Lady Hamilton's daughter, of what interest could it be to Mrs. Cadogan to contradict her if she chose to acknowledge it ?

The second person of the trio, Horatia herself, strikes one from

her letter as having been a prudish precise sort of person. Evidently she was not in love with the idea of having the notorious Lady Hamilton for a mother.

She owned that Lady Hamilton had many excellent qualities, but also many bad ones, and thought that 'she would have been a very different woman if she had come under better influences.'

People who talk in this strain do not usually go out of their way to fabricate a deliberate lie for a purely sentimental reason.

Horatia herself thought that Lady Hamilton had adopted her to prove to Nelson that she was above petty feminine jealousies; surely rather an inadequate motive.

At any rate, if she believed Nelson to be her father, she was in any case illegitimate; and her pertinacity in her inquiries as to her real mother seem rather surprising, when the fact had to be considered that the true mother might not be a person so reputable as Lady Hamilton.

At the very last, when Lady Hamilton lay on her death-bed at Calais, Horatia (then a girl of fifteen) besought her to tell her who her mother really was. Lady Hamilton refused 'being fearful that I should leave her.'

If Horatia were really her own daughter, can any one imagine that she would have let the secret die with her? One could understand the deception being kept up to that point, but with her life nearing its close, what could be the inducement to withhold the truth?

The prime reason for concealment was no doubt the hope that the Nation would relent and grant Nelson's last request to his country, to make suitable provision for Lady Hamilton and Horatia. This, all the world knows, was never done. Lady Hamilton died an absconding debtor at Calais, and after Nelson's death was in constant difficulties for money.

So much for Horatia. From what we know of her it seems in the highest degree improbable that she should have concocted Mrs. Cadogan's remark to suit a purpose of her own. The third person in the trio must now be brought to the bar. Was Lady Hamilton lying when she said 'Perhaps she is my daughter'?

Who shall crib, cabin and confine, or, what is more to the purpose, bring to the point, this 'Modern Serpent of Old Nile!' as Miss Moorhouse calls her? Like one of the elusive, mocking Bacchantes, as which she was everlastingly posing, she draws on, she evades, and disappears with derisive laughter.

In judging of her credibility in the little scene which we have taken as the crux of our argument, we must turn away our eyes from that entrancing loveliness as depicted by Romney, stop our ears with wool lest we hear the siren's warbling, and simply consider Lady Hamilton by what we know of her as a woman of her word. In the first place both Jeaffreson and Miss Moorhouse are unanimous in admitting that the fair Emma was no mean hand at drawing the long bow.

This was very plain in her claims for losses sustained in Naples and Sicily by herself and Sir William Hamilton. There can be no doubt that all this was fully made good by the generosity of Queen Maria Carolina. But Emma looked at the Queen's gifts as private perquisites, and sent in exaggerated claims for compensation to the Home Government.

Another candid critic remarks that she could make Nelson believe anything. 'She puffs the incense full in his face and he snuffs it up with a self-satisfied air.' (Rather a cruel picture of our national hero !)

Miss Moorhouse also says that Lady Hamilton's character was not so much immoral as un-moral. She told the truth in ordinary cases, but in a fix she told lies without compunction. Sir William's pet name for her was his 'beautiful Grecian,' and there can be little doubt that the fair Emma's moral or un-moral code approximated more closely to that of ancient Athens than to that which is considered 'the thing' to-day.

Elsewhere we are told that Lady Hamilton 'practised on Nelson's credulity.' To conclude, Lady Hamilton has been convicted of one of the most cruel and slanderous lies in history. When pressed by certain persons on the question of Horatia's parentage, she replied that the name of the mother 'was too high to mention,' meaning without a doubt her whilom bosom friend and benefactress Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples and Sicily. There can be no two opinions as to this being a baseless and indecent invention, and shows the lengths to which Lady Hamilton would go in drawing on her imagination for her facts.

Thus, on comparing what has been said about the three persons taking part in the little scene, there can be no doubt in the mind of any thinking person as to who was lying on that occasion. The conclusion is inevitable. Lady Hamilton was not the mother of Horatia Nelson. What becomes then of the 'Thompson' letters and Nelson's joy in the birth of his child by Lady Hamilton ?

Which brings me to my theory. *Lady Hamilton, to strengthen her hold on Nelson and rivet him to herself by a firmer chain, imposed upon him a supposititious child.*

The arguments to support this proposition are not far to seek. Emma Lady Hamilton, in spite of her seeming ingenuousness (which at the best was that of the French *ingénue*) had a shrewd eye for the main chance. Her husband on the completion of his ambassadorial duties at Naples was returning to England an aged and failing man, and Emma had the prospect of a much reduced income for the present and a penurious widowhood in the future. As she had been the chosen companion of a queen for many years and used to every luxury, this vista we may be sure was in no wise pleasing. What more natural than that Lady Hamilton should look around for an escape from these threatening circumstances and hitch her chariot to a star, the rising star of England's naval hero, Nelson?

Her mind once decided on her course of action, Emma was not one to stick at a trifle. At what moment she arrived at this point it is difficult to guess. Possibly before the return journey from Naples (November 6, 1800), at any rate soon after she was able to measure herself with Lady Nelson.

But why, it may be said, invent a child? Was not Lady Hamilton able to hold Nelson without that tie?

It is doubtful. In Nelson the love of children was an intense passion, something quite out of the common. We read of his playing with his stepson Josiah Nisbet under the table, and when Horatia was still an infant Nurse Gibson told how the hero would come to the house and worship the child for hours. This trait in Nelson's character, we may be sure, did not escape the eyes of Emma. She herself was rather fond of children, and generally had some about her. She was thus the more easily able to discover Nelson's idiosyncrasy.

It is quite clear that Nelson returned to England with no intention of shaking off his wife, but 'dear Lady Hamilton' was so much in evidence that Lady Nelson became huffy and cold. Lady Hamilton had had the bad taste to intervene in the quarrel, soon with the fixed intention of widening the breach as much as possible, and annexing the Admiral to herself for ever.

The battle seems to have swung pretty evenly between the rivals. Nelson appears to have bidden his wife good-bye before starting for Southampton and to have written her a civil letter after-

wards. Upon which Lady Hamilton plays her trump card and makes Nelson the father of her supposititious child!!!

The state of perfervid joy into which the announcement (according to Nelson) threw the imaginary 'Thompson' demonstrated the acuteness of Lady Hamilton in this latest strategic move.

The naive statement, 'And you, thank God, never gave one to anybody else,' seems to point to the fact that Lady Hamilton may have excused herself for not knowing of her condition at an earlier stage, by the fact that it was her first child. In ordinary everyday matters not connected with his profession Nelson was as simple as a babe, and, as has been before stated, Lady Hamilton could make him believe anything. At any rate from this moment Nelson definitely broke with his wife, and in reply to a letter from her seeking reconciliation he wrote in a very harsh and unfeeling manner from Copenhagen on March 4, just over a month after Horatia's birth, saying that all he wanted was to be left to himself.

Now to examine more fully other corroborative evidence in this matter.

We learn from more than one source that by this time the style of Lady Hamilton's beauty had materially altered. She was no longer Romney's 'divine lady,' but had become a massive statuesque being.

William Beckford, the author of 'Vathek,' and Mrs. St. George, both mention her tendency to *embonpoint*. This, of course, if our hypothesis is the correct one, made the deception all the easier. But had *embonpoint* not been natural to her, we may be sure Emma, being such an inveterate *posseuse*, would have 'dressed the part.' We have an instance of that in her earlier life with Greville, where, after he had scolded her for singing in public at Ranelagh, she put off her fine clothes, and came down to him 'in a plain cottage dress,' and said that as he was not pleased with her he had better send her away. Miss Moorhouse gives it as her opinion that Emma really loved Greville with all her heart, but if so, she still studied her 'effects,' and in later life this no doubt became a confirmed habit. In describing the death of Sir William Hamilton in the arms of his faithless wife, with Nelson at the bedside, Miss Moorhouse quotes Swinburne's remark on 'moral impossibilities' as applied to the character of Mary Stuart. He said, 'Students of human character who are not professional moralists will readily admit that there are fewer moral impossibilities than professional moralists think.' The remark applied to this singular death-bed scene



will apply equally well to the events at Horatia's birth, whether she were Lady Hamilton's daughter or not.

The secret birth, the taking of the child by night, when only eight days old, to the house of Nurse Gibson by Lady Hamilton, quite unattended, reads more like a chapter out of a penny novelette than a scene in real life.

But the beautiful Emma revelled in that sort of thing. When the Royal family were planning their escape from Naples, she was the prime mover in all the secret arrangements, and held a reception at the English Embassy while the Queen's jewels were being secretly smuggled down a dark underground passage, with a suitable accompaniment of passwords, dark lantern, cutlasses, &c.

Lady Hamilton was in her element throughout that time, as any one may see who studies that portion of her life ; and on her return to England, one can almost imagine her inventing a child for Nelson, just for the excitement of carrying the thing through, without any ulterior motive.

That a child should be born and disposed of in a week's time seems almost a physical impossibility, though such cases have been known. In view of her mother's evidence to the contrary, I prefer to think the time was spent in pitching on a suitable foundling.

Lady Hamilton was greedy of admiration from all sorts and conditions of men and women. In Italy she charmed monks, lazzaroni, boatmen, and once a whole convent of nuns. To such a one to pick up a stray nurse child, and giving the mother a few pounds promise to adopt it, would be the easiest thing in the world. People of the polite world sometimes resisted Lady Hamilton's charm successfully, but the lower orders never.

A grown up 'enfant terrible' in some matters, over others she could be as secret as the grave. The mystery of Horatia's parentage is indeed a 'dead' secret.

There may be a slight clue in her animosity against one of her cousins, who, Lady Hamilton stated, had told many 'wicked lies' about her. This cousin may have known more than was safe, and have attempted to levy blackmail. At any rate the phrase 'wicked lies' is suggestive. It is a favourite one in the mouths of those who can do a good bit in the same line themselves. That the seemingly open and ingenuous Lady Hamilton could keep a secret is proved by the fact of Nelson not knowing of the existence of her first child, Emma Carew. A pathetic letter is in existence

from this daughter to Lady Hamilton, which proves that the latter had treated her in a peculiarly cold-blooded way, not even acknowledging her motherhood, though in childhood she had made a great fuss over her, as related in some letters to Greville. Another trait in the character of Lady Hamilton that lends colour to our theory was her curious, chameleon-like adaptability to her surroundings.

She could indeed be 'all things to all men.' With the poor and stingy Greville she was the careful housewife, religiously entering in her account-book  $\frac{1}{2}d.$  given to a poor man.

The same woman, when thrown with the open-handed and generous Nelson, would lose hundreds at the gaming table night after night. To Romney she was the perfect model, his 'divine lady,' the flower of her sex.

With Sir William Hamilton she was always the animated statue, seeking ever to please his eye, and never wearying of her 'attitudes,' while to Nelson she was constantly displaying her good heart, as the patroness of the navy, and special pleader for subordinates in disgrace.

She had a tremendous fund of vitality, and threw herself heart and soul into anything that she attempted. The bigger the scheme the better she was pleased, and as regards personal courage, she was a sort of feminine Nelson. When fully convinced that nothing would please Nelson better than to be a father, her resolution would be taken at once to gratify that wish, without too nice a regard to ways and means. Horatia's statement of the excessive scolding at Richmond is paralleled and shown to be probable by the account of an absolutely authentic and similar incident given by Miss Moorhouse. The child being only twelve years of age, Lady Hamilton told her among other things 'that her conduct was bringing her (Lady Hamilton) to the grave, and that when she was no longer with her to protect her, she (Horatia) would come to nothing.' Such exaggerated language to a young child gives one the impression that Lady Hamilton had been indulging rather too freely in the champagne of which she was so fond. This incident happened about 1812: seven years after Nelson's death and about three years before her own.

To resume, if it is urged that the whole idea that Horatia was a supposititious child is too incredible and extravagant, it must be taken into account that Lady Hamilton throughout her life set ordinary rules and standards of conduct at defiance. We need

mention only one or two happenings in her career to prove this.

Her bursting into song among the fashionable throng at Ranelagh Gardens, when under Greville's protection, has been already touched on. A companion picture to that is her inviting a little party to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of the Nile, when imprisoned in the King's Bench prison for debt! And to crown the list of what we may call her 'mad' ideas comes the fact that she saw no impropriety in expressing a wish to be buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, near the grave of Nelson!!!

On consideration of the whole facts of the case, I think it will be granted that a woman possessed of such fantastic ideas, in addition to such a dubious moral record, would be quite capable of imposing a child on Nelson, to please the hero and gratify her own private ends.

I am not dubbing Lady Hamilton an unscrupulous adventuress. She was merely a student of pleasure and pleasing, would put herself to great personal inconvenience to assist those she loved, but if so-called moral restrictions came in the way of the fair Emma's scheme of life, so much the worse for them. In conclusion, the theory I have advanced rests, of course, entirely on the evidence of Lady Hamilton's mother as related by Horatia (Mrs. Ward). If the balance of probability is, as I have proved to my own satisfaction at least, in favour of the truth of that narrative, my hypothesis may be said to be virtually proved. If, on the other hand, Horatia is thought to be the real daughter of Lady Hamilton, the latter told the truth about the matter *on this one occasion only*, and lied about it on every other; whilst her mother and Nelson's adopted daughter, whose trustworthiness we have not a tittle of evidence against, are supposed (for this one occasion) to be deviating from the truth.

I leave decision on the point to the discriminating reader. The hypothesis, if granted, will not affect our estimate of Lady Hamilton's character very much either for better or worse. It may show her as a shade more shrewd and calculating than we have given her credit for being, but that is counterbalanced by the thought that the whole fraud (if fraud it was) was only another manifestation of her anxiety to please. And the results were harmless enough.

If, as is supposed, Horatia were a foundling, picked up haphazard, the condition of life in which she was reared and brought

up by Lady Hamilton was a great improvement on the one to which, probably, she was born. *She* was not injured by the imposture.

If Nelson was wronged, he was always in happy ignorance. Had he lived, and the imposition been discovered, he would, without a doubt, have suffered greatly. Emma, if guilty, achieved the victory of not being found out, and if Nature had been so unkind as to refuse to gratify Nelson's paternal instinct, was she so very much to blame in trying to repair the injustice? The sternest moralist could only censure her, in so far as she used the child as a means of separating Nelson from his wife.

On this aspect of the problem we have no evidence at all. It is entirely inferential; so it is only fair to give Lady Hamilton the benefit of the doubt.

To conclude, if Lady Hamilton was really the mother of Horatia, what was the motive for the excessive secrecy she maintained on the subject, only once half admitting it as we have seen?

The only reason for such secrecy expired at the death of her husband, Sir William Hamilton, in 1803.

Nelson by committing her and the child to the care of the nation at Trafalgar acknowledged his supposed fatherhood to all the world in 1805. Lady Hamilton still remained silent.

And in her last illness at Calais she still refused to satisfy the enquiring Horatia, 'fearing I should leave her.' Lady Hamilton could not have feared that, even if she had been able to say, 'I have told countless lies about your birth, I have never told the truth about it except to your father Lord Nelson, but I, the notorious Lady Hamilton, am your mother.'

We may take it she was not able to say that, and thinking it for the material benefit of the child, who was the sole attendant of her death-bed, that the *real* truth should not be revealed, the plucky, elusive, baffling Emma carried it with her to the grave.

One would like to believe that: that her last thought was for another's well-being and peace of mind, a beautiful and self-willed child, to whom by general assent she had ever striven to do her duty according to her lights.

ARTHUR BULLARD.

## TO KIEL IN THE 'HERCULES.'<sup>1</sup>

BY LEWIS R. FREEMAN.

### III. NORDHOLZ, THE DEN OF THE ZEPPELINS.

I HAVE written in a previous article of the great contrast observed between the *moral* of the men at Norderney and the other sea-plane stations visited by parties from the Allied Naval Commission, and that of those in the remaining German warships, accounting for the difference by the fact that the former had been kept busier than the latter, and that they had not suffered the shame of the 'Great Surrender' which has cast a black, unlifting shadow upon the dregs of the High Sea Fleet. Whether the airships were kept as busy as the sea-planes right up to the end it would be difficult to say, but, whatever may be the reason for it, we found the *moral* of the great Zeppelin stations suffered very little, if at all, in comparison with that of the working bases of the naval heavier-than-air machines.

For all the barbarity of many of their raids, there was splendid stuff in the officers and crews of the Zeppelins which engaged in the campaign of 'frightfulness' against England, and it is idle to deny it. In a better cause, or even in worthier work for an indifferent cause, the skill and courage repeatedly displayed would have been epic. Considering what these airships faced on every one of their later raids—what their commanders and crews must have known were the odds against them after the night when the destruction of the first Zeppelin over Cuffley in September 1916 proved that the British had effectually solved the problem of igniting the hydrogen of the inner ballonets—one cannot but conclude that the *moral* of the whole *personnel* must have been very high during even this trying period. If it had not been high, there would undoubtedly have been mutinies at the airship stations, such as are known to have occurred on so many occasions among the submarine crews. Even in the light of present knowledge, there is nothing to indicate that there had ever been serious trouble in getting Zeppelin crews for the most hazardous of raids. So far as could be gathered from our visits to the great airship stations of the North Sea littoral, this very excellent *moral*

<sup>1</sup> Copyright in U.S.A. by Lewis R. Freeman, 1919.

prevailed to the last; indeed, practically everything seen indicated that it still prevails.

Of the several German naval airship stations visited by parties from the Allied Commission, the most important were Althorn, Nordholz and Tondern. The interest in the latter was largely sentimental, due to the fact that it was practically wiped out last summer as the result of a bombing raid by aeroplanes launched from the *Furious*. It was known that little had been done to rehabilitate it as a service station since that time, and the Commission's airship experts' desire to visit what was left of the sheds was actuated by a wish to see what damage had been done, rather than by any feeling that the station really counted any longer as a base of Germany's naval air service. Our visit to the ruins of Tondern, and what we learned there of the way it was destroyed, is a story by itself.

Germany had very ambitious plans for the development of the Althorn station, and it is probable at one time that it was intended that it should supersede even the mighty Nordholz as the premier home of naval Zeppelins. If such were really the intention, however, there is no doubt that it was effectually put an end to by a great fire and explosion which occurred there about the middle of last year, the material destruction from which—in sheds and Zeppelins—was vastly greater even than that from the British raid on Tondern. The Germans speak of this disaster with a good deal of bitterness, usually alluding to the cause as 'mysterious,' but rather giving the impression that they believe it to have been the work of 'Allied agents.' If this is true, the job will stand as a fair offset against any single piece of work of the same character that German agents perpetrated in France, Britain or America. Only the blowing up of the great Russian national arsenal in the second year of the war is comparable to it for the amount of material damage wrought. Althorn was still a station of some importance down to the end of the war, however, and that the Germans still expected to do important work from there was indicated by the fact that one of its new sheds housed the great 'L-71,' the largest airship in the world at the time.

But it was in the great Nordholz station that the airship sub-commission was principally interested, not only for what it was at the moment—incomparably the greatest and most modern of German Zeppelin aerodromes—but also for what had been

accomplished from there in the past, and even for what might conceivably be done from there in the future. Nordholz is a name that would have been burned deep into the memories of south and east coast Britons had it been known three years ago, as it is now, that practically all of the Zeppelin raids over England were launched from there. The popular idea at the time—which even appears to have persisted with most Londoners down to the present—was that airship stations had been constructed in Belgium, and that these alternated with those of Germany in dispatching raiders across the North Sea to England. A single glimpse of such a station as Nordholz is enough to show that the huge amount of labour and expense involved in building even a comparatively temporary aerodrome fit for regular Zeppelin work would have been fatal to the idea of establishing such installations in Belgium, or anywhere else where Germany did not feel certain of remaining in fairly permanent control. The station at Jamboli, in Bulgaria, for instance, is known to have been able only to dispose of one or two Zeppelins, and considerable intervals between flights were imperative for keeping them in trim. It would never have been equal to the strain of steady raiding.

There were other German airship stations within cruising distance of England, but Nordholz was so much the best equipped, especially in the first years of the war when Zeppelin raiding was the most active, that the most of the work, and by long odds the most effective of it, was done from there. There were grim tales to be told by that band of hard-eyed, straight-mouthed, bull-necked pilots—all that survived some scores of raids over England and some hundreds of reconnaissance flights over the North Sea—who received and conducted the Naval Commission party, though, unfortunately, we did not meet upon a footing that made it possible more than to listen to the account of an occasional incident suggested by something we were seeing at the moment.

The route which our party traversed from Wilhelmshaven to the Nordholz airship station—the latter lies six or eight miles south of the Elbe estuary in the vicinity of Cuxhaven—was a different one from any followed on our previous visits, all of which had taken us more to the south or east. It was through the same low-lying, dyked-in country, however, where the water difficulty, unlike most other parts of the world, was one of drainage rather than of irrigation. Great Dutch windmills turned ponderously under the impulse of the light sea-breeze, as they pumped the water



off the flooded land. Cultivation, as in the region traversed to the south, was at a standstill, but overflowing barns—great capacious structures they were, with brick walls and lofty thatched roofs—proved that the harvest had been a generous one.

Instead of routing our two-car special over the all-rail route *via* Bremen, distance and time were saved by leaving it at a small terminus opposite Bremerhaven, crossing to the latter by tug, and proceeding north in more or less direct line to our destination. Little time was lost in getting from one train to the other. The tug, which had been held in readiness for our arrival, cast off as soon as the last of the party had clambered over its side, and the short run across the grey-green tide of the estuary was made in less than a quarter of an hour. Four powerful army cars—far better machines, these, than the dirigible junk heaps we had been compelled to use at Wilhelmshaven—were waiting beside the slip, and another ten minutes of what struck me as very fast and reckless driving, considering it was through the main streets of a good sized city, brought us to the station and another two-car special. Both going and returning, it was the best 'clicking' lot of connections any of the parties made in the course of the whole visit, showing illuminatingly what our 'hosts' could do in that line when they were minded to.

Swift as was our passage through the streets of Bremerhaven, there was still opportunity to observe many evidences of the vigorous growth it had laid in the decade preceding the outbreak of the war, and of the plans that had been made, too, in expectation of a continuation of that growth. Blocks and blocks of imposing new buildings—now but half-tenanted—and the nuclei of what had been budding suburbs were more suggestive of the appearance of a western American mushroom metropolis after the collapse of a boom than a town of Europe. The railway station—a fine example of Germany's so-called 'New Art' architecture—with its spacious waiting rooms, broad subways and commodious train sheds, looked capable of serving the city of half a million or so which it had confidently been expected the empire's second port would become at the end of another few years. As things have turned out, Bremerhaven will at least have the consolation of knowing that it is not likely to be troubled with 'station crushes' for some decades to come.

The astonishingly well dressed and orderly crowd of a thousand or more waiting outside the portal of the station in expectation

of the arrival of a train-load of returning soldiers made no unfriendly demonstration of any character. On the contrary, indeed, as at Wilhelmshaven, a number of children waved their hands as our cars drove up, and a goodly number of men solemnly bared their heads as we filed past. The special which awaited us at a platform, reached after walking through a long vaulted subway running beneath the tracks, consisted, like the one we had left on the other side of the river, of an engine and two cars. The rolling-stock of this one was in better shape than that of the other, however, and with a better maintained road-bed to run over, the last leg of our journey was covered at an average speed of over thirty miles an hour—quite the fastest we travelled by train anywhere in Germany.

For the most of the way the line continued running through mile after mile of water-logged sea-level areas crossed by innumerable drainage canals and bricked roadways gridironing possible inundation with their raised embankments. At the end of an hour, however, the patches of standing water disappeared, and presently the bulk of the great sheds of Nordholz began to notch the northern skyline, where they stood crowning the crest of the first rising ground in the littoral between the Dutch frontier and the Elbe. With only a minute or two of delay in the Nordholz yards, the train was switched to the airship station's own spur, and at the end of another mile had pulled up on a siding just directly opposite the main entrance.

The Commander of the station, with two or three other officers, was waiting to receive us as we stepped out on the ground. Ranged up alongside this row of heel-clicking, frock-coated, be-medalled and be-sworded Zeppelin officers was an ancient individual of a type which seemed to recall the fatherly old Jehus of the piping days of Oberammergau. Every time the officers saluted, he raised his hat, bowed low from the waist, and exclaimed, 'Good morning to you, gentlemen.' When the last of us had been thus greeted, he called out a comprehensive, 'This way to the carriages, gentlemen,' and trotted off ahead, bell-wether fashion, through the gate.

Here we found waiting four small brakes and a diminutive automobile, the sum total of the station's resources in rapid transit, according to the Commander. Getting into the motor to precede us as pilot, he asked the party to dispose itself as best it could in the horse-drawn vehicles. Then, with old Jehu holding the

reins of the first vehicle and men in air service uniform—utter strangers to horses they were, too—tooling the other three, we started off along a well-paved road.

A long row of very attractive red brick and tile houses of agreeably varied design were apparently the homes of married officers. Our way led past only the first five or six of them, but a stirring of lace curtains in every one of these told that we were running the gauntlet of hostile glances all the way. One glowering Frau, though in the semi-négligé of a 'Made-in-Germany' kimono of pale mauve, her Brunnhildian brow crowned with a 'permanently Marcelled' coiffure of the kind one sees in hairdressers' windows, disdained all cover, and so stepped out upon her veranda just in time to see the elder of her blond-braided offspring in the act of waving a teddy bear—or it may have been a woolly lamb or a dachshund—at the tail of the procession of invading *Englanders*. She was swooping—a mauve-tailed comet with a Gorgon head—on the luckless 'fraternisatress' as my brake turned a corner and the loom of a block of barracks shut 'The Row' from sight, but a series of shrill squeals, piercing through the raucous grind of steel tyres on asphalté pavement, told that punishment swift and terrible was being meted out.

'More activity there than I saw in all of Bremerhaven,' laconically observed the Yankee Ensign sitting next me. 'Who said the German woman was lacking in temperament?'

Driving through the barracks area—where all the men in sight invariably saluted or stood at attention as we passed—and down an avenue between small but thickly set pines, the road debouched into the open, and for the first time we saw all the sheds of the great station at comparatively close range. Then we were in a position to understand with what care the site had been chosen and laid out. Occupying the only rising ground near the coast south of the Kiel Canal, it is quite free from the constant inundations which threaten the alluvial plain along the sea. The sheds are visible from a great distance, but it is only when one draws near them that their truly gigantic size becomes evident. Of modern buildings of utility, such as factories and exhibition structures, I do not recall one that is so impressive as these in sheer immensity. Yet the proportions of the sheds are so good that constant comparison with some familiar object of known size, such as a man, alone puts them in their proper perspective.

The sheds are built in pairs, standing side by side, and on a

plan which has brought each pair on the circumference of a circle two kilometres in diameter. The chord of the arc drawn from one pair of sheds to the next in sequence is a kilometre in length, while the same distance separates each pair on the circumference from the huge revolving shed in the centre of the circle. The whole plan has something of the mystic symmetry of an ancient temple of the sun. Of the half-dozen pairs of sheds necessary to complete the circle, four had been constructed and were in use. Each shed was built to house two airships, or four for the pair. This gave a capacity of sixteen Zeppelins for the four pairs of sheds, while the two housed in the revolving shed in the centre brought the total capacity of the station up to eighteen—a larger number, I believe, than were ever over England at one time.

Scarcely less impressive than the immensity of the sheds and the broad conception of the general plan of the station was the solidity of construction. Everything, from the quarters of the men and the officers to the hangars themselves, seemed built for all time, and to play its part in the fulfilment of some far-reaching plan. Costly and scarce as asphalt must have been in Germany, the many miles of roads connecting the various sheds were laid deep with it, and, as I had a chance to see where repairs were going on, on a heavy base of concrete. The sheds were steel-framed, concrete-floored, and with pressed asbestos sheet figuring extensively in their sides. All the daylight admitted, as we saw presently, filtered through great panes of yellow glass in the roof, shutting out the ultra-violet rays of the sun, which had been found to cause airship fabric to deteriorate rapidly.

The barracks of the men were of brick and concrete, and were built with no less regard for appearance than utility. So, too, the officers' quarters and the casino, and the large and comfortable-looking houses for married officers I have already mentioned. All had been built very recently, many in the by no means un-effective 'New Art' style, to the simple solidity of which the Germans seemed to have turned in reaction from the Gothic. Beyond all doubt Germany was planning years ahead with Nordholz, both as to war and peace service. They were quite frank in speaking of the ambitions they still have in respect of the latter, and, from casual remarks dropped once or twice by officers, I should be very much surprised if their plans for developing the Zeppelin as a super-war machine have been entirely shelved.

The road along which we drove to reach the first pair of sheds

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to be visited ran through extensive plantations of scraggly screw-pine, which appear to have been set—before the site was chosen for an air station—for the purpose of binding together the loose soil and preventing its shifting in the heavy winds. Wherever the trees had encroached too closely upon the hangars, the plantations had been burned off. Over one considerable area the accumulations of ash in the depressions showed the destruction to have been comparatively recent, and this I learned had been burned over, in the panic which followed the blowing up of the Tondern sheds by British bombing machines last summer, in order to minimise the risk from the raid which Nordholz itself never ceased to expect right down to the day of the armistice.

The staggering size of the great sheds became more and more impressive as we drew nearer, and when the procession finally turned and went clattering down the roadway between one of the pairs, the towering walls to left and right blotted out the sky like the cliffs of a rocky cañon. Half-way through this great defile the officers of the station were waiting to receive and conduct us round. A hard, fit, capable looking lot of chaps they were. Every one of them had at least one decoration, most of them many, and among these were two or three Orders Pour le Mérite, the German V.C. One at least of them—the great long-distance pilot, Von Butlar—was famous internationally, and few among the senior of them (as I was assured shortly) but had been over England more than once. They were the best of Germany's surviving Zeppelin pilots, and one was interested to compare the type with that of the pick of her sea-pilots as we had seen them at Norderney.

Running my eye round their faces as the mingled parties began moving slowly toward the side door of the first shed to be inspected, I recognised at once in these Zeppelin officers the same hard, cold, steady eyes, the same aggressive jaw, and the same wide, thin-lipped mouth that had predominated right through the officers we had met at Norderney. These, I should say, are characteristic of the great majority of the outstanding men of both of Germany's air services. The steady eye and the firm jaw are, indeed, characteristic of most successful flying men, but it is the 'hardness,' not to say cruelty, of the mouth which differentiates the German from the high-spirited, devil-may-care air-warrior of England and America.

These Zeppelin pilots seemed to me to run nearer to the German

naval officer type than did the sea-plane officers. The latter were nearly always slender of body, wiry and light of foot, whereas (though there were several exceptions, including the great Von Butlar) the former were mainly of generous girth, with the typical German bull neck corrugating into rolls of fat above the backs of their collars. A major of the R.A.F., who had been walking at my side and doing a bit of 'sizing up' on his own account, put the difference rather well when he said, as we waited our turn to pass in through the small side door of the great grey wall of the shed: 'If I was taking temporary refuge in a hospital, convent or orphan asylum during a German air raid, I'd feel a lot better about it if I knew that it was some of those sea-plane chaps flying overhead rather than some of this batch. That thick-set one there, with the cast in his eye and the corded neck, has a face that wouldn't need much make-up for the Hun villain in a Lyceum melodrama. Yes, I'm sure these Zepp. drivers will average a jolly lot "Hunnier" than the run of their sea-plane men.'

Up to that moment my experience of German airships had been limited to the view of them as slender silver pencils of light gliding swiftly across the searchlight-slashed skies of London, and three or four inspections of the tangled masses of aluminium and charred wood which remained when ill-starred raiders had paid the supreme penalty. I was indebted to the Zeppelins for a number of thrills, but only two or three of them (and one was in the form of a bomb which gave me a shower bath of plate-glass in Kingsway) were comparable to the sheer wave of amazement which swept over me when, having passed from the cold grey light of the winter morning into the warm golden glow of the interior of the big shed to which we had come, I looked up and beheld the towering loom of the starboard side of 'L-68,' with the sweeping lines of her, fining to points at both ends, exaggerating monstrously a length which was sufficiently startling even when expressed in figures. The secret of the hold which the Zeppelin had for so long on the imagination of the German people was not hard for me to understand after that. It was easy to see how they could have been led to believe that it could lay Paris and London in ruins, and that the very sight of it would in time cause the enemies of their country to sue for peace. One saw, too, how hard it must have been for them finally to believe that the Zeppelin had been mastered by the aeroplane, and that the high hopes they had built upon it had really crashed with the fallen raiders.

There were two Zeppelins in the shed we had entered—'L-68' and another monster of practically the same size. The former, with great irregularly shaped strips of fabric dangling all along its under side, suggested a gigantic shark in process of being ripped up the belly for skinning. Being deflated, the weight of its frame was supported by a number of heavy wooden props evenly distributed along either side from end to end. Its mate, on the other hand, being full of hydrogen and practically ready for flight, had to be prevented from rising and bumping against the yellow skylights by a series of light cables, the upper ends of which were attached at regular intervals along both sides of the framework, while below they were made fast to heavy steel shoes which ran in grooves set in the concrete floor. The latter contrivance—especially an arrangement for the instant slipping of the cable—was very cleverly devised and greatly interested the Allied experts.

There were two or three things the popular mind had credited the modern Zeppelin with embodying which we did not find in these latest examples of German airship development. One of these was an 'anti-bomb protector' on the top, something after the style of the steel nets erected over London banks and theatres for the purpose of detonating dropped explosives before they penetrated the roof. The fact that attempts to destroy Zeppelins by bomb had invariably—with the exception of the one brought down by Warneford in Belgium in 1915—resulted in failure, was doubtless largely responsible for this belief in the existence of a protecting net, whereas the reason for those failures is probably to be found in the fact that only about one bomb in a hundred will find enough resistance in striking an airship to detonate. At any rate, there were no indications that either the earlier or later Zeppelins we saw had ever been protected in this way. Indeed, we did not even see a single one of the machine-guns, which everyone had taken for granted were mounted on top of all Zeppelins to resist aeroplane attack, though these, of course, with their platforms, may well have been removed in the course of the disarmament imposed by the armistice terms.

Nor had these late airships the bright golden colour of those that one saw over London in the earlier raids. That the refulgent tawnniness of them was not due entirely to the reflected beams of the searchlights was proved by the uncharred fragments of fabric one had picked up at Cuffley and Potter's Bar. But the German designers had been giving a good deal of study to invisibility



since that time; with the result that these new airships were coloured a dull slaty black over the whole of their exposed surfaces, that would hardly reflect a beam of bright sunshine.

The cars, which were both smaller and lighter than those from the airships brought down in England, were all underslung, and none of them was enclosed in the framework, as had often been stated. Even these were not built entirely of metal, heavy fabric being used to close up all spaces where strength was not required. The bomb-dropping devices had been removed, but the numbered 'switchboard' in the rearmost car, from which they could be released, still remained. The cars, free from every kind of protuberance that could meet the resistance of the air, were effectively and gracefully 'stream-lined.' The framework and bodies of the cars were made of the light but strong 'duraluminium' alloy; which the Germans have spent many years in perfecting for this purpose. A small fragment of strut which I picked up under 'L-68' has proved, on comparison, considerably lighter in specific gravity of the alloy than similar pieces from three of the Zeppelins brought down early in the war. Indeed, in spite of its admixture of heavier metals for 'stiffening,' the latest alloy seems scarcely heavier than aluminium itself.

The inspection of an airship to see that it had been disarmed according to the provisions of the armistice was, as may be imagined; rather more of a job than a similar inspection of even a 'giant' sea-plane. In a Zeppelin that is more or less the same size as the *Mauretania* the distances are magnificent, and while most of the inspection was confined to the cars; that of the wireless, with a search for possible concealed machine-gun mountings, involved not a little climbing and clambering. One's first sight of the interior of a deflated Zeppelin—in an inflated one the bulging ballonets obstruct the view considerably—is quite as impressive in its way as the premier survey of it from the outside. No 'tween decks prospect in the largest ship afloat, cut down as it is by bulkheads, offers a fifth of the unbroken sweep of vision that one finds opened before him as he climbs up inside the tail of a modern airship. Although airy ladders and soaring lengths of framework intervene, they are no more than lace-work fretting the vast space, and the eye roams free to where the side-braces of the narrow 'walk' seem to run together in the nose. Only, so consummate the illusion wrought on the eye and brain by the strange perspective, that 'meeting point' seems more like six hundred miles away

than six hundred feet. The effect is more like looking to the end of the universe than to the end of a Zeppelin. No illusion ever devised on the stage to give 'distance' to a scene could be half so convincing.

All that was 'cosmic' in you vibrated in sympathy, and it took but a shake of the reins of the imagination to fancy yourself tripping off down that unending 'Road to Anywhere' to the Music of the Spheres. You—

'Gee, but ain't that a peach of a little "Gyro,"' filtering up through the fabric beneath my feet awakened me to the fact that the inspection of 'L-68,' having reached the rearmost car, was near its finish. Clambering back to earth, I found the party just reassembling to go to the carriages for the drive to the great revolving shed, which was the next to be visited.

Its central revolving shed is perhaps the most arresting feature of the Nordholz station. It is built on the lines of a 'twin' engine turn-table, with each track housed over, and with every dimension multiplied twenty-five or thirty-fold. The turning track is laid in a bowl-shaped depression about ten feet deep and seven hundred feet in diameter. The floors of both sheds (which stand side by side, with only a few feet between) are flush with the level of the ground, so that the airships they house may be run out and in without a jolt. The turning mechanism, which is in the rear of the sheds and revolves with them, is entirely driven by electricity. The shifting of a lever sets the whole great mass in motion and stops it to a millimetre of the point desired, the latter being indicated on a dial by a needle showing the direction of the wind.

The Germans assured us—and on this point the British and American airship experts were in full agreement with them—that the revolving shed is absolutely the ideal installation, as it makes it possible to launch or house a ship directly *into* the wind, and so allows them to be used on days when it would be out of the question to launch them from, or return them to, an ordinary hangar. The one point against it seems to be its almost prohibitive cost. This central shed at Nordholz was designed some time before the war, and was completed a year or so after its outbreak. The Germans did not tell what it had cost, but they did say that the latter was so great—both in money and in steel deflected from other uses—that they had not contemplated the building of another during the continuance of the war.

Another interesting admission of a Zeppelin officer at Nordholz

was to the effect that one of their greatest difficulties had arisen through the fact that it had been found practicable and desirable to increase the size of airships far more rapidly than had been contemplated when most of the existing sheds were designed. Thus many hangars—even at Nordholz, where practice was most advanced—had become almost useless for housing the latest Zeppelins. The proof of this was seen at one of the older sheds which we visited, where both of the airships it contained had been cut off fore-and-aft to reduce their lengths sufficiently to allow them inside. Thirty or forty feet of the framework of the bows and sterns of each, stripped of their covering fabric, were standing in the corners. They assured us that while an airship thus ‘bobbed’ at both ends was not necessarily considered out of commission, it would take several days of rush work to get it ready for flight, and that during most of this time sixty to eighty feet of it—the combined length of the nose and tail which had to be cut off to bring it inside—would have to remain sticking out, exposed to the weather.

To anyone who, like myself, was not an airship expert but had been ‘among those present’ at a number of the earlier raids on London, the last shed visited was the most interesting of all, for it contained what is in many respects Germany’s most historic Zeppelin, the famous ‘L-14.’ Twenty-four bombing flights over England were claimed for this remarkable veteran, besides many scores of reconnaissance voyages. All of the surviving pilots appeared to have an abiding belief in her invulnerability—a not unnatural attitude of the fatalist toward an instrument which has succeeded in defying fate. This is the way one of them expressed it, who came and stood by my side during the quarter-hour in which the inspecting officers were climbing about inside the glistening yellow shell of the historic raider in an endeavour to satisfy themselves that she was, temporarily at least, incapable of further activities:

‘It will sound strange to you to hear me say it,’ he said, ‘but it is a fact that all of the officers and men at Nordholz firmly believed that L-14 could not be destroyed. Always we gave her the place of honour in starting first away for England, and most times she was the last to come back—of those that did come back. After a while, no matter how long she was late, we always said, “Oh, but it is old L-14; no use to worry about her; she will come home at her own time.” And come home she always did. All

of our greatest pilots flew in her at one time or another and came back safe. Then they were given newer and faster ships, and sometimes they came home, and sometimes they did not. —, who was experimenting with one of the smaller, swift types of half-rigids when it was brought down north of London—the first to be destroyed over England—had flown L-14 many times, and come home safe. And so had —, our greatest pilot, who was also lost north of London, very near where the other was brought down, and where we think you had some kind of trap. L-14 saw these and many other Zeppelins fall in flames, and the more times she came home the more was our belief in her strengthened. The pilot who flew her was supposed to take more chances (because she really ran no risks, you see), and if you have ever read of how one Zeppelin in each raid always swooped low to drop her bombs, you now know that she was that one. Because we had this superstitious feeling about her we were very careful that, in rebuilding and repairing her, much of her original material should be left, so that whatever gave her her charmed life should not be removed. Although our *duraluminium* of the present is much lighter and stronger than the first we made, L-14 still has most of her original framework; and, although improved technical instruments have been installed, all her cars are much as when she was built. You will see how much clumsier and heavier they are than those of the newer types. And now, for some months, we have used L-14 as a "school" ship, in which to train our young pilots. You see, her great traditions must prove a wonderful inspiration to them.'

A few minutes later I had a hint of one type of this 'inspiration,' when a pilot (who had fallen into step with me as we took a turn across the fields on foot to see the hangars of the 'protecting flight' of aeroplanes) mentioned that he had taken part in a number of the 1916 raids over the Midland industrial centres. Knowing the Stygian blackness in which this region was wrapped during all of the Zeppelin raiding time, I asked him if he had not found it difficult to locate his objectives in a country which was plunged in complete darkness.

'Not so difficult as you might think,' was the reply. 'There were always the rivers and canals, which we knew perfectly from careful study. Besides, a town is a very large mark, and you seem to "sense" the nearness of great masses of people, anyhow. Perhaps the great anxiety they are in establishes a sort of mental

contact with you, whose brain is very tense and receptive. Effective bombing is very largely a matter of psychology, you see.'

I saw. Indeed, I think I saw rather more than he intended to convey.

The inspection over, and everything having been found as stipulated in the armistice, we were conducted to the officers' casino for lunch. Each member of the party, as had been the practice from the outset, having brought a package of sandwiches from the ship in his pocket, it was intimated to the Commander of the station that we would not need to trouble him to have the luncheon served which he intimated had been prepared for us. The same situation had arisen at Norderney and several other of the stations previously visited, and in each of these instances our 'hosts' of the day had acquiesced in the plainly expressed desire of the senior officer of the party that we should confine our menu to what we carried in our own 'nose-bags.' Nordholz, however—quite possibly with no more than an enlarged idea of what were its duties under the circumstances—was not to be denied. A couple of plates of very appetising German red-cabbage *sauerkraut*, with slices of ham and blood sausage, were waiting upon a large side-table as we entered the reception room, and to these, as fast as a very nervous waiter could bring them in, were added the following: a large loaf of *pumpernickel*, a pitcher of chicken *consommé*, a huge beef steak, with a fried egg sitting in the middle of it, for each member of the party, two dishes of apple sauce, and eight bottles of wine—four of white and four of red. The steaks—an inch thick, six inches in diameter, and grilled to a turn—were quite the largest pieces of meat I had seen served outside Ireland since the war. The *hock* bore the label '*Dürkheimer*,' and the other bottles, which were of non-German origin, '*Ungarischer Rotwein*.'

'Although I'd hate to hurt their feelings,' said the senior officer of the party, surveying the Gargantuan repast with a perplexed smile, 'I should like to confine myself to my sandwiches and leave a note asking them to forward this to some of our starving prisoners. Since we've been feeding their pilots and commissioners in the *Hercules*, however, I suppose there's no valid reason why we should hesitate to partake of this banquet. I'll leave you free to decide for yourselves what you want to do on that score.' We did. It was the American Ensign who, smacking his lips over the

last of his steak, pronounced it the best 'hunk of cow' he had had since he was at a Mexican *barbecue* at Coronado; but it was the General who had a second helping of apple sauce, and wondered how they made it so 'smooth and free from lumps,' and what it was they put in it to give that 'very delicate flavour.'

Hung around all four walls of the room were perhaps a dozen oil-paintings of flying officers in uniform, and although they bore no names, we knew (from what had been told us of a similar display in the reception room at Norderney) that they were portraits of pilots who had lost their lives on active service. One—a three-quarter length of a small wiry man, with gimlet eyes and a jaw that would have made that of a wolf-trap look soft and flexible in comparison—I recognised at once as having been reproduced in the German papers as the portrait of the great Schramm, who had been killed when his Zeppelin was brought down at Potter's Bar. Another—the bust of a man of rather a bulkier figure than the first, but with a face a shade less brutal—was also strangely familiar. I felt sure I had seen before that terribly determined jaw, that broad nose with its wide nostrils, that receding brow, with the bony lumps above the eyes, and the tentacles of my memory went groping for when, and where, while I went on sipping my glass of '*Rotwein*' and listening to Major P—and Ensign E—comparing sensations on dropping from airships with parachutes.

'If the Huns,' the former was saying, 'had had proper parachutes; most of the crews of the Zepps. brought down in England could have landed safely instead of being burned in the air. Of the remains of the crew of the one brought down at Cuffley, hardly a fragment was recognisable as that of a man. But if—'

Like a flash it came to me. The warm, comfortable room, with its solid 'New Art' furniture, and the table stacked with plates of food and wine bottles, faded away, and I saw a tangled heap of metal and burning *débris*, sprawling across a stubble field and hedgerow, and steaming in the cold early morning drizzle that was quenching its still smouldering fires. Five hours previously that wreckage had been a raiding Zeppelin, charging blindly across London, pursued by searchlights and gun-fire. I had watched the ghostly shape disappear in the darkness as it shook off the beams of the searchlights, and when it appeared again it was as a descending comet of streaming flame, streaking earthward across the north-western heavens. After walking all the rest of the night—with

a lift from an early morning milk-cart—I had arrived on the scene at daybreak, and before the cordon of soldiers which later kept the crowds back had been drawn. They had just cut a way through the wreckage to one of the cars, and were cooling down the glowing metal with a stream pumped by a little village fire-engine. Then they began taking out what remained of the bodies of the crew. Some had been almost entirely consumed by the fierce flames, and it is literally true that many of the blackened fragments were hardly recognisable as human. But there was one notable exception. By a miracle, the chest and head of the body of what had undoubtedly been the commanding officer had been spared the direct play of the flames. The fingers gripping the steering wheel were charred to the bone, but the upper part of his tunic was so little scorched that it still held the Iron Cross pinned into it. The blonde eyebrows, beneath the bony cranial protuberances, were scarcely singed, and even the scowl and the tightly compressed lips seemed to express intense determination rather than death agony. That portrait—and doubtless most of the others that looked down upon our strange luncheon party that day at Nordholz—must have been painted from life.



## *THE TROUT OF THE MILL POOL.*

BY A. BUXTON.

IMAGINE a narrow racquet court with water covering its floor, and you will have a picture of the Mill Pool. The court is fifteen yards long and six broad : it is paved with the clearest of clear streams some three feet deep, over a light gravel bottom. Its front wall is a tall mill, its sides are brickwork dropping plumb—one fifteen, the other twenty feet to the water. It has no roof or back wall, but possesses a gallery at the lower end in the shape of a bridge, fifteen feet in air, at the level of the lower wall, along which, to the left, its wooden fence also extends.

In the front wall is a low arch, leading to the mill wheel, and six feet along at the foot of the lower wall, half-way between the back of the court and the left serving square, is the opening of a brick-lined culvert, out of which flows the stream when the mill is not working, from its source in the village just above. It is a covered-in culvert some four feet wide, and you see nothing but the mouth of it—water to within two feet of its arch.

Just over your head, as you stand in the gallery, are the branches of a tree : under the bridge, tied to it by a chain, is a punt, and behind you, down stream, is a straight stretch of water, shallower than that in the Mill pool, darkly shaded by trees and bushes on either bank.

About ten years ago I stood for the first time on that bridge, and under me there wriggled, plain for the blindest of eyes to see, a string of feeding trout, the uppermost with his head at the culvert four pounds or thereabouts, the lowest under the bridge all in order of merit down to one pound, and all in such condition and of such rich colour that one wondered if they ever stopped wriggling and feeding. Whom did they belong to, and could one get leave ? On to the bridge sauntered a groom—grooms can do anything. ‘Arl get ye laive from Mr. ‘Oomphreys,’ and I arranged to be there at 6 P.M. the following day, and kept the appointment.

Below the shaded stretch was a two-pound trout feeding recklessly on duns—so recklessly that though I committed every imaginable mistake, he insisted on getting himself caught. So far so good, now for the real business in the pool. I eyed the four-pounder

and his satellites still wriggling and feeding, and I discussed with the groom how they should all be caught, when a third party arrived on a bicycle. 'Av ye got yer pairmit?' 'No,' I said with quiet dignity; 'I've got leave from Mr. Humphreys.'

'Oh, 'av ye; arm 'Cumphreys and 'ar niver 'aird owt of it.' That was a stumper; I turned for explanation to the groom. 'Well,' said he, 'ar niver thought owt ud coom of it, 'ar niver bothered.' I humbly apologised to Mr. 'Oo—what else could I do? 'And now what had I better do?'

'Ye'd joost better pack oop,' he said, and I did, but as I left the bridge he gave a parting shot. 'Ar don't suppose ye've cotched owt?' I owned up shamefacedly, and he showed a kindly humanity, for he let me take my poor little two-pounder, and then I did a silly, wicked thing—Heaven knows why; but I think because of the absurdity of the situation which he had produced. I turned back and tipped, in full view of Mr. 'Oo, who looked on and saw it was only two shillings—I tipped that placid brazen-faced liar of a groom. Then I 'packed oop' and fled the place for two years to let things cool down a bit, when again that same string of trout was visited (the groom had gone, as such grooms do), and this time 'Oo was approached direct. He remembered me well, laughed, and was kind, telling me how to get 'laive' in the orthodox manner from the owners of the Mill.

Mr. A., the innkeeper where I was staying, drove me to the place, and I stood in a position to attack the four-pounder, and appreciated the difficulties of the job. If one waded up below the bridge there was no room to cast, and, moreover, the tail of the string would object to being stamped on while one fished for the head of it, and would show its objection by bolting up-stream and putting itself and all the others to ground in the culvert.

The alternative was the bridge itself, but if by some chance the fish was hooked, how was one to land it with a three-foot landing-net from water ten feet below, no way down above the bridge, and no chance of moving down stream because of it? Well, it was not hooked yet, so I chose the bridge, and made up my mind that whatever else happened the four-pounder should have first chance of getting herself (it was obviously a hen) caught.

I think it was a sedge that was presented to her, but it lit on her tail, and was only flicked out of the jaws of number two, a fat three-pounder, just in time, much to that fish's bewilderment and disgust, for three-pounders are not used to such treatment.

A few more attempts, and the fly fell just into the mouth of the culvert ; very slowly that broad tail wagged and lowered, and the grey head rose up. I saw the white mouth open and shut, and realised that the difference between three feet and ten feet was going to be vital. She fled up the culvert out of sight, and where or how far it led, Heaven knows. The rod point was lowered and held right below the level of the bridge to avoid the line getting cut on the bricks of the culvert—the reel screamed, the trout heaved and jerked, other trout bolted in and out of the culvert, and there was, I can assure you, much commotion and excitement in the water and out of it ; and I wondered who had constructed that mysterious underground passage and what he had put in it, and prayed that the architect was a simple man with simple tastes and had put nothing in it at all by way of ornament or obstruction. Probably it was so, for nothing fatal occurred, and then suddenly the line slackened, and before I realised what was up, out bolted my fish once more into daylight.

Out of the culvert into the pool, out of the pool into the air, out of the air into the pool, up the pool under the wheel arch, another leap dangerously near that awful wheel, but still on, as I realised with a jerk, when all the slack line from the culvert was recovered and fish and rod met once more. She fled from the arch into the only patch of weed which the pool contained, and therein buried herself and came to rest, while I stood up on that bridge, enjoying the feelings of an attacked balloonist who has forgotten his parachute.

I looked at Mr. A. and he was white as a sheet ; but something had to be done, and now was the time to do it. I gave him the rod—the first rod he had ever held—and told him to pull himself together, and do nothing but hang on till I reappeared, and then trembling with fright I scrambled down the bank below the bridge into the stream like a cartload of bricks, up floundering under the bridge into the pool. ‘Drop the rod,’ I gasped ; ‘I’ll catch it.’ His teeth were clenched, and he was literally hanging on as he looked down in anguish at me.

‘Drop it, man, drop it ; slack the line and drop it.’ He dropped and I caught it, and that excellent fish never moved, and once more we were united and now on the same level, so wading and reeling in I approached the weed and saw her great back in the middle of the patch, and tried to scoop weeds, fish, and all into the net, but it was too small, and she naturally kicked in the most terrifying

fashion. Still the gut held, and she remained embedded and fixed in the weed. Her tail was seized, but it was too slippery to hold and she flicked it free. Then I slid my hand up her side, and in the end thumb and forefinger met in her gills and all was well. Mr. A.'s face grew pink again, and he said 'Bar gom,' a sign of returning consciousness, as I waded back under the bridge, the fish clutched in my hand, and clambered out to safety on the bank to sit and gloat, too exhausted from sheer excitement to stand, and realise that the fish really did weigh, what I had for two years dreamt it weighed, four pounds. Too late for the fray, Mr. 'Oo appeared with a huge fifteen-foot length of landing-net shaped like a soup-ladle, which I trust and believe I should not have used had it arrived in time.

Last year I was there again with leave. Mr. 'Oo was there too with his abominable net, so were the trout, a big red brown cock fish, who only appeared occasionally out of the culvert to swear at his wife, a light grey, rather shorter fish, but even plumper, whenever she rose too near his tail. Even she was only half in sight at the mouth of the culvert. Then there was a blotchy coloured hen fish, who was also quite indecently fat—appeared to be nobody's friend, and to have no very fixed position, besides other smaller fry of two pounds, &c. These minute descriptions may sound ridiculous, but the trout were only a rod's length off, and the water was as clear as a chalk stream at its source can be. They seemed quite indifferent to company on the bridge, presumably because anyone crossing it always looked at them, and thanks to a wholesome dread of Mr. 'Oo resisted the temptation, which must be extreme to the youth of the village, to try to catch them. I tried for the light-grey hen fish first, but she moved too far up the culvert, and as nothing else was in sight for the moment I put a fly over a fat little trout of one pound, which he took at once, and intending to put him back allowed the use of the long net. Once on the bank, however, 'If ye don't want 'im, ar do,' from Mr. 'Oo, and in these hard times, I gave in to him.

This capture had not disturbed the occupant of the culvert, and the grey fish after a long wait reappeared, or rather the last few inches of her did.

After many attempts I got the fly, a red sedge, to fall two feet up the culvert, by hitting the gut against the brickwork of the near edge of its arch, half-way along the cast, which had the effect of jerking the fly up the dark interior of the culvert. She saw it and

rose quietly. I hit her hard, but the hook did not hold and she seemed puzzled and annoyed, but not frightened; so I changed to a Liddles Fancy and allowed it to sink, as she was obviously taking more things under water than on the surface. She took no interest in it on the few occasions on which I got it up to within sight of her, until a lucky cast passed it between the wall of the culvert, against which she was lying, and her mouth. She had to see it that time, and just tilting up sucked it in exactly at the corner of the culvert in full view. The hook went in with a thump and she raced from sight, heaving out the line. I kept the rod where I had kept it with her grandmother, and after a long interval she too reappeared from the culvert, and fled round and round the pool jumping and boring. There was no weed this time worth bothering about, but she seemed to be tiring at last and fairly steady, so scorning the soup-ladle I gave Mr. 'Oo the rod, who looked happier than Mr. A. about it, and repeated the bridge manoeuvre successfully. She was still on but, revived by my company in the pool, by no means beat, and what with attempts to charge between my legs, which I on'y just closed in time, dives for the culvert and rushes for the punt, which was still there, and attached by its dangerous chain, I had a warm five minutes of it before I got her—three and a quarter pounds and a picture of loveliness, 'Oo all the while utterly puzzled at my refusal to use the soup-ladle. 'Ard av cotched it out before that, onywaay.'

A short ten minutes later her place was definitely taken by her wandering sister with the blotchy complexion, who was even more irritating to the cock fish than the late occupant had been. She was a most amusing subject to watch, for she kept having exciting chases after, I think, minnows, which escaped out of the culvert and which she hunted exactly like a terrier after a rat up and down the wall of the pool with quick, short strokes of her tail, doubling and twisting and shaking them in her jaws when the hunt had a successful finish. Two other spectators now arrived on the bridge, a workman, who after watching my fishing in silence for some time, suggested 'If ye slashed it oop under yon whail, ye maight drar summat out.' This was done literally, and resulted in the bolting of a small trout with his tail between his legs.

This man told me that the main food of the trout was water-lice; that may or may not be their correct name, but they were a kind of transparent aristocratic edition of a wood-louse, and the dead fish was full of them and of shrimps.

The other spectator was a small boy of a silent but inquisitive disposition who, judging by his appearance, cultivated the smaller land variety of the above insect, for both of which reasons I suggested that he should sit in the gallery rather than in the stalls.

The blotchy trout was a difficult one to deal with, as she would not sit still, and was almost invariably too high up the culvert, except when butted out by the cock or making an excursion after a minnow. The tree above my head had had many of its leaves replaced by flies before. I induced her to take a Liddles Fancy, and she instantly shook herself free again and remained in full view, suspicious but still occasionally taking things under water. Just before I had to go the cock fish came down into view, perhaps to find out why the hen had ceased annoying at his tail. He was the best of them all, and the greediest, for he took the same fly with a gulp at the first shot, and kept it as a memento of a most exciting afternoon. Either the gut was frayed or I was too violent, probably both; at any rate we parted at the strike, and he sat in that pool below me, shaking his head and lashing his tail like a mad bull, and finally charged up the culvert, his decoration on his nose. He will find it hard to get rid of; but most of my sympathy goes to the blotchy hen. His peevishness will descend on her shoulders, and his buttings may have an added point to them, if she takes her meals too near his private seat in the culvert.

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### *RANDOM THOUGHTS ON TWO ARMIES.*

To one who has fought in the English and American armies, and has also seen something of the French, the various characteristics of the soldiers of the three great Allies are a never-failing source of interest. There is, however, a more particular interest in observing idiosyncrasies of the American and the Englishman, inasmuch as their two countries, speaking the same language, governed by the same laws, and actuated by similar ideals, are so essentially different. The most striking, or at any rate the most immediate, distinction is the question of speech. No one expects an Englishman and a Frenchman, as an American and a Frenchman, to understand each other (and yet, as a matter of fact, for all the essentials of life they both manage to get on without the help of an interpreter); but for the Englishman and American it would seem at first that the difficulty of language could not exist. Even here, however, the curse of Babel has not been entirely removed. The words may be the same, but the slang, the intonation, and the emphasis are all different, and these are the things after all which express a man's thought.

Not long ago I came across an American chaplain, who was full of admiration for Great Britain and her tremendous sacrifices during the war, but who was painfully impressed by the lack of religion in the British Army. The expression 'Gone West,' for instance, struck him as being particularly flippant and irreligious. He thought, probably, that it showed a total want of faith in the existence of a future life. Of course, any one who knows the British Army has doubtless heard that expression frequently used with anything but an irreligious intent. The American chaplain was merely unfamiliar with the psychology of the British soldier. In the same way, to English ears certain expressions in American slang strike just the wrong note. The phrase 'God's own country,' for example, sounds aggressively conceited. As a matter of fact, it is not conceit, it is merely a lack of self-consciousness. Most Englishmen regard their own country as the most delectable spot in the universe, only they are too sophisticated to mention it. The American believes the same thing of the United States, and he has no objection to saying it. If anybody disagrees with him,



he is perfectly willing to listen to their arguments and to state the reasons for his claim. In a smaller way, mere questions of emphasis are apt to be very misleading. The American does not at first realise that 'Not arf!' is often the highest superlative in the Tommy's vocabulary. The Englishman, on the other hand, is puzzled by 'Glad to meet you!' He accepts it as a compliment, and he considers it always unnecessary and usually insincere, whereas it is merely intended as a greeting with no more meaning than 'Good-morning!' or 'How do you do?'

These points, however, though intrinsically interesting are after all only details. It is in their attitude towards the war that the real characteristics of the two countries are most evident. It has been claimed by hostile critics that the Englishman's habitual indifference never forsook him, and that he never really learned to take the war seriously. A more correct statement would be that the Tommy's unflagging sense of humour never failed him, and that this sense of humour proved to be one of his greatest assets. Unconscious, as all true humour should be, it amounted almost to a system of philosophy. The ability to laugh at oneself and carry on was the exclusive secret of the English soldier. The 'poilu' was witty enough, so was the American, but a prolonged diet of intellectual fireworks is not very nourishing. Humour, at any rate, is a better preservative of *morale* than wit, perhaps because humour after all is only a synonym for a sense of values. In these days, when people are apt to regard every established institution with instinctive criticism, the need of a sense of values is obvious, and it was just this sense of values that the Tommy possessed in a pre-eminent degree. He was able to see things as they were, to lay aside what was worth while and store it deep in his heart, and to laugh at everything else. He found a peculiar relief in that pitiless presentation of actual conditions so perfectly exemplified in the drawings of Bairnsfather. The 'poilu' found his salvation by delving back into mediaeval history and subconsciously transporting the war into the realms of chivalry. The well-known picture *Debout les Morts* might equally serve as a title for one of the exploits of the Chevalier Bayard or Bertrand Du Guesclin. It strikes a note that is just as true of the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries as it is of the twentieth.

But the American's attitude toward the war was something entirely different from either of the two we have already described. He was unwilling to accept the situation as something that must

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be done with as good a grace as possible, as the Englishman had done, and he was even further from the traditional heroic mood of the Frenchman. He had not the philosophy necessary for one, nor the historic background for the other. He did have, however, the student's passion to get to the bottom of his subject, to find out the truth about the origin of this turmoil in Europe, so that he could really justify himself in his own eyes for coming three thousand miles to indulge in the old-fashioned pursuit of war.

After the die was cast in 1914 the British soldier had little interest in the complicated course of events which had brought Europe to the edge of the precipice. Why Germany had deliberately violated Belgian neutrality he did not know, but the fact remained that she had. He was there to see that she did not overrun all France and then turn on England. When a man sees a highwayman hold up his friend he does not usually stop to speculate on the highwayman's motives, he is more apt to defer speculation until the culprit has been handed over to the police. The American, however, had only seen the hold-up from afar and he wanted to make quite sure of the facts of the case before taking sides. The responsibility of the war, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the use of gas, the question of submarines, were all argued back and forth, throughout the eastern States at any rate, with tremendous energy. Finally when the break did come after so many weary months of discussion, America entered the war under conditions very different from those experienced by England in 1914. There was no sudden burst of indignation, no cheering crowds, no question of the immediate embarkation of several divisions to the scene of action. There was in fact little glamour about her entry into the war, but there was in its place a tremendous amount of seriousness.

For one thing the idea of an army at all, let alone a large army, was something very foreign to the American mind. In England the Black Watch or the Grenadier Guards are household words, but very few people in America had ever heard of the 16th Infantry Regiment or indeed any other regiment. Hitherto the regular army had lived a very narrow life either in the Philippines or in isolated posts throughout the country where there was little intercourse with the rest of the community. West Point certainly was looked upon as a model institution of its kind, but the army as a career had never made much of an appeal to the average boy. Suddenly in the spring of 1917 men in the United States woke up

to the fact that they were going to embark on a new life of which they knew absolutely nothing. They began enlisting or going to officers' training camps, according to the amount of education they had had, while the energy always latent in the American public and always seeking a new outlet swept into all military channels at tremendous pressure. Everybody wanted to learn the new business of soldiering and they wanted to learn it at once. French and British officers were astonished at the apparently unlimited capacity of the recruit for hard work. He drilled all day, listened to lectures in the evening and studied all night. After drifting into the war stern foremost, as Mr. Roosevelt expressed it, every man set to work to turn the boat around as quickly as possible. There was to be sure not much question of enjoyment about it all. In fact there was an unexpressed current of feeling that *joie de vivre* was incompatible with the military *régime*. From the moment he donned a uniform, long before there was any chance of his going to France, the American soldier dedicated himself to a life of ceaseless labour, feeling that any relaxation must mean a corresponding loss of efficiency.

Naturally the word 'efficiency' implied conscription. Furthermore in America the volunteer system with its savour of individualism was regarded as undemocratic, and the responsibility of choice was left not to the prospective soldier but to the State. Every young man not physically unfit was automatically subject to military service, and the process of conscription, which had aroused such bitter discussion in England, swept over America practically without a murmur of dissent. The difficulty of conscientious objectors never arose because the Government never recognised their existence. Whether they existed or not the force of public opinion was so strong that they never made known their presence to others.

After months of the most arduous training, rendered doubly hard by being so far from the scene of action, the American soldier finally arrived in France. In many cases he had arrived without equipment, without artillery, and without engineers, but these things could easily be supplied by his Allies. What they could not give him and what he had to have before he could begin to acquire a higher technical education was discipline, and this quality he had brought with him. When we consider how essentially ignorant of the very meaning of the word 'discipline' the average American had been, this in itself was a remarkable indication of the serious

vein in which he had taken the war. The custom of saluting, for instance, had to be elaborately explained to every recruit lest he should think in some way it involved a loss of personal dignity, but once it had been explained to him and its necessity made clear, the American saluted more punctiliously than any other soldier.

After a certain period of adjustment to new and strange conditions—billeting for one thing was entirely new to American troops—the newly arrived divisions took their place in the quieter sectors of the line, to complete their education. At first they were brigaded with French or British troops, and later when all the lower units had had a certain experience a division took over its own sector. Meanwhile the American soldier was busy forming new impressions. The 'poilu' he admired from the very start, first because the defence of Verdun appealed to his imagination, and secondly because his school-books had taught him he owed a great debt to the country of Lafayette and Rochambeau. But there were certain sides to France, not mentioned in the history books, he found difficulty in approving. The informal sanitary arrangements were a never-ending source of worry to a man who appreciated good plumbing more than any other creature comfort. As to the fighting of which he had heard so much, so far he had seen no sign of it, in fact he began chafing against the uneventfulness of trench warfare. The artillery was not even allowed to fire at obvious targets for fear of rousing the enemy's retaliation. On the other hand he regarded with suspicion the ingenuity expended on making the trenches comfortable. It suggested that their occupants intended to live there indefinitely while he wanted to 'get on with the war.'

It was the original intention of the General Staff that after the Americans had served their apprenticeship they should eventually form two armies, one to serve with the British and one with the French. The German offensive, however, in the spring of 1918 altered these plans, as it did a good many others, and the first American Army was not formed until the end of August. During this period a number of American divisions were in line with the British, and the 'Tommy' and the 'Yank' came to see a good deal of each other. To most Americans the British army was a book with seven seals. The cinema at home had taught him a good deal about the French and even the Germans, but except for the Hearst newspapers, which he dimly recognised to be not impartial, he knew very little about England or the

English army. Hitherto, his only experience had been in quiet parts of the line, mostly in the Vosges or Alsace, and he realised that the sort of war he was seeing now was entirely different. Here certainly there was more going on, the trenches were closer together and there was a good deal of raiding activity. But here too there was that same disquieting predilection for a quiet life. The Tommies told him they were 'fed up with the bloody war,' and he began to wonder if men could ever return to the offensive imbued with that spirit.

There were indeed a good many things in the British army not dreamed of in his philosophy. Side by side with an apparent indifference there was a tremendous interest in things which seemed to the American of small importance. The minute attention bestowed on a soldier's appearance, the importance attached to games, the exalted position of the non-commissioned officer, were all entirely new to him. In the American army if a private had any ambition he promptly aspired to the rank of officer. The position of an N.C.O. carried no particular prestige in itself, it was merely a stepping-stone to higher things. But in the English army the rank of corporal or sergeant was something worth while in itself. There was in fact a certain pride in the *métier* which had never occurred to the American. The English non-commissioned officer wants to have the best subsection in the battery, not primarily because it will help to beat the Germans but because it gives him a personal glow of satisfaction. In his spare time he is wondering whether his battery will win the prize at the next show or whether the wheelers of his gun-team are looking as well as they did last month. The American non-com. on the other hand is always living in the future, in his spare hours he is studying French or reading some handbook on tactics preparatory to the day when he may be an officer.

Possibly the difference may be due in part to the 'newness' of the American army. In England people make a mistake when they talk about the 'New Army,' what they mean is the old army enlarged. There may be twelve battalions in the regiment instead of two, but the regiment though it has grown in size still clings to the old traditions. In other words the army, small as it was, was powerful enough to put its stamp on the hundreds of thousands of men who joined it. In America, however, conditions were exactly reversed and the civilian proved the stronger factor. The Army was literally brand new, it did not grow out of the old army

but was suddenly conjured into existence by Act of Congress. These men brought into their new profession all the earnestness, all the practical common sense, that had characterised them in civil life. In many cases their knowledge of the technique of the various arms was perfectly astonishing, but yet a shrewd observer could always have told that they were not professional soldiers. It was not that they did not carry themselves well or that they were not thoroughly conversant with their duties, it was simply that when you talked to them you realised that their point of view on the war, on life in general, was that of a civilian. Possibly the steady influence of months and years of war might have changed the attitude of mind of this huge civilian army. It might have grown histrionic like the French or philosophic like the English, but it seems more probable that it would have continued to develop along its own lines, and despite a constantly increasing military efficiency it would always have retained a distinctive civilian character.

ARNOLD WHITRIDGE.

### AN UNTOWARD EVENT.

THIS is the story of an Untoward Event. Everyone agreed as to its Untowardness, though there were several distinct and conflicting opinions as to who was responsible. The Prime Minister of the Canadian Province immediately and formally laid the blame on the General Officer Commanding the Division; the latter gave the Station Staff Officer the worst quarter of an hour he had ever experienced, and the Station Staff Officer for a whole week made life a burden to the sentries; the latter again, though unable through force of circumstances to pass their misfortunes on, were heard to express with some emphasis the view that the 'Nigger' was at the bottom of the mischief, and if 'the Nigger' had been asked (which he was not) there seems every reason to believe that he would have made some severe comments on the Prime Minister of the Canadian Province.

However, there is no denying that the Untoward Event occurred, that the telegraph wires were busy for three days afterwards, that nothing else was talked of in the station for a whole week, and that no fewer than fifty-seven Babus in Government offices wrote or copied despatches concerning it.

It all started, of course, with the Prime Minister of the Canadian Province. If he had not been so anxious to visit the Mogul Fort nothing would have happened; on the other hand, if the General Officer Commanding the Division had not forgotten his duties as cicerone, nothing would have happened either.

But as the General (we have already said it) put the blame on someone else who put it on someone else who put it on someone else who put it on the Prime Minister we return to the point from which we started.

Strictly speaking it would be absurd to allude to the Hon. Joshua McCabe as a point. His enemies, who were numerous and not over-particular in their language, had called him many unsavoury names in the course of political amenities, but they had never denied the generous amplitude of his proportions. It had even been the proud boast of his Province that in Joshua they possessed the heaviest Premier in the world.

Certainly his frame was massive to the verge of deformity, his waist measurement was a matter for annual calculation in the



provincial newspapers, and his legs which moved with surprising rapidity resembled nothing so much as animated bolsters. Withal he boasted a mental and physical activity which would have done credit to a man one-third his girth. In his youth he had been a great horseman, and now, since circumstances forbade that form of exercise, he ploughed up tennis courts amid clouds of dust and played a violent and highly dangerous game of golf. His success in politics was similarly due to his volcanic energy; his triumphs included the 'steam-rollering' of a Railway Syndicate and a Newspaper Combine that had for years haunted the dreams and made hideous the waking hours of the Provincial Government. Now he was taking a well-earned holiday from his arduous duties, a holiday of necessity rather than of choice, since a turn in the political wheel had despatched him and his friends into what are known as the cold shades of opposition. His friends, therefore, were left to 'work the stunt,' while Joshua himself, as he told a farewell deputation of supporters at the railway station, 'set out to have a look round the rest of the planet.'

His travels took him to India, which at this particular time was nearly the only place in the world where life was reasonably safe, and his guide-book took him to a certain well-known city on the banks of the Jumna.

His first duty, like that of every good citizen and every bad American, was to write his name in the Callers' Book of the very Great Personage who dominated and inspired and illumined the city in question.

His next was as obviously to visit the Mogul Fort or rather the Mogul Palace inside the Fort, or those parts of it which have survived the successive depredations of hordes of Afghans, Persians, Jats, and American tourists.

It is here that he entered into the (for him) sinister orbit of the Station Staff Officer. The latter is a purely Indian phenomenon, invented solely in order to give employment to superfluous officers in the British garrison. Having no particular business of his own, the S.S.O. occupies himself exclusively with the business of other people. For which purpose he employs several clerks and a typewriter, and wears the sacred tabs on his shoulders.

The particular Station Staff Officer with whom we and Mr. McCabe are concerned was as a shining light in great darkness. Never had so zealous and painstaking a man adorned the post. No one was too obscure, and no one's business was too trivial to

escape his all-encompassing ambit. So his clerks murmured a little resentfully an old saying about new brooms, and he was 'thought well of' at the Brigade Headquarters.

Just at the moment he was principally concerned with the safety of the Mogul Fort. The guns that were almost obsolescent at the outbreak of the Boer War no longer conveyed the measure of its importance, any more than did the high jagged ramparts which menaced the city outside. The Fort held a Prisoner, a real live Prisoner, a political Prisoner, Rajput by race and Brahmin by religion. No one quite knew what he was accused of, where he came from, or when he was going to be tried, or indeed anything at all about him except his Brahminism and his extreme importance. The first was patent from the careful instruction for food and washing which had accompanied him, the second was made painfully clear by a business Government which sent on the average two Private and Highly Confidential Memoranda a day emphasising the fact. So it was clearly the task of the S.S.O. most rigorously to supervise the goings out and the comings in of all persons who might conceivably be either German spies or Bengali agitators. Indeed, it was left entirely to his discretion to admit or reject visitors, and he had framed an excellent rule of his own that none but British subjects might enter at such a time of crisis; which rule gave him endless opportunities for the repulse of wandering Americans, all of whom he regarded with deep suspicion as being almost pro-Germans, and whom he habitually sent away in a state of seething indignation.

On this particular morning in November the S.S.O. was seated in his office interviewing a singularly pertinacious visitor from Kansas City, at the moment when Mr. McCabe, escorted by a Gate Orderly, approached with his petition to view the Palace. It was eleven o'clock, Joshua was finding the heat a little trying, and he halted on the verandah of the office to mop his expansive brow. As he did so an indignant man danced out of the inner sanctum.

'Wull,' he exclaimed with an eloquent wave of his stick, 'I've got on so far for forty-five years without seeing your little Fort, and I reckon it won't just kill me not to see it now. Say, Sir' (this to Joshua), 'it's no blamed use *your* trying to get inside this show. There's a half-dollar Barnum's exhibition monkey inside there who's sitting on this derved Palace like a five-year-old hen on an addled egg.'

With which parting shot he allowed himself to be escorted

by his Orderly to the outer gate. The remark addressed to Joshua had been perfectly overheard by the S.S.O., also by his clerks in the next room and by three passing Tommies. There were some subdued titters and human nature would not have been human nature, if that important officer's mind had not allowed itself to be just a little prejudiced against his fresh visitor.

Rather curtly he offered Joshua a seat and inquired his business.

'I wish to see the Palace and Historical Buildings,' said Joshua.

The S.S.O. frowned magisterially. He prided himself on his sharpness in detecting an American. Now everyone knows that there is all the difference in the world between an American and a Canadian accent. Indeed, while the former frequently claim that they and they only 'speak the tongue that Shakespeare spoke' and that we in England have degenerated into nasalism, the latter maintain that their Anglo-Saxon is even purer than that of their neighbours.

Howbeit the S.S.O., who was new to his office and therefore imperfectly educated in such distinctions, immediately jumped to the conclusion that his visitor was yet another Yankee.

'Are you a British subject?'

'Yes.'

The S.S.O. gave him a searching glance.

'Where is your passport?'

Mr. McCabe made an exhaustive search in all his pockets and confessed that he had left it at the hotel.

'But,' he said hopefully, 'here is my card.' And, with the air of one who clinched the matter, he laid on the table a large oblong of pasteboard bearing the inscription:

HON. JOSHUA McCABE.

Now it had never occurred to him that the intelligence thus conveyed could create anything but a profound impression. In an expansive moment he had once described himself as 'premier of one of the fairest jewels in the British Crown,' and that either his province or his name should be unknown to the ordinary educated Anglo-Saxon seemed in the highest degree improbable.

Yet it is a regrettable but indubitable fact that the names of the Premiers of the Provinces of Canada are no more known to plain captains in the British Army than are the names of captains in the British Army to Canadian Premiers.

So it was that the S.S.O., already on a hot scent, started off in full cry. Here was this stout, plausible person, who had already banded unseemly jests on his doorstep with an offensive American—this person with an accent that cried to Heaven and a passport which he had 'left at his hotel'—crowning his infamy with a piece of brazen imposture. It was not necessary to be a student of Debrett to feel confident that there existed no peer of the family name of McCabe. The intruder was not only a liar, not merely a palpable impostor, but a dangerous character, probably a hyphenated American, masquerading as a British aristocrat, with designs on the obsolete guns and an eye for the Private and Highly Confidential Prisoner.

'I regret,' he said in his most forbidding manner, 'that I cannot grant you a pass.'

'What!' replied the bewildered Joshua, to whom such a contingency had never occurred. 'Not grant me a pass? Really I think that there must be——'

'Quite out of the question,' said the S.S.O. firmly, feeling that he was really keeping his temper very well with this impudent fellow. 'And I must ask you to leave the Fort at once.'

'But sakes alive, man,' persisted Joshua, who was beginning to get a little warm; 'do you realise that I am——'

'I quite realise who you are—and what you are, realise it so well that unless you leave the Fort at once I shall be compelled to call the Orderly in to see you off.'

At this point the ex-Premier's self-control completely deserted him.

Spluttering with indignation he told the S.S.O. exactly what he thought of him and the Fort and the Government of India, uttered some portentous if rather vague threats and burst from the room like a rogue elephant on the war-path.

'A very dangerous fellow,' said the S.S.O., and after assuring himself that the Orderly had him well in tow, he sat down to compose a long and urgent despatch to the higher authorities. This despatch went to the Officer Commanding the Station, who passed it on to the Brigade Headquarters, who communicated it to the Divisional Area, who sent it to the Adjutant-General. There were also three or four other intermediate steps, for of such is the Government of India.

That it eventually reached its destination seems probable, since exactly five weeks later the local police had orders to watch

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the Cavendish Hotel for an American who had disguised himself as the son of a British peer.

Meanwhile a very hot and angry ex-Premier had gone on his way.

If the matter had ended there no great harm would have been done, but as fate would have it, on his return to the hotel Mr. McCabe found a large and coroneted envelope awaiting him containing an invitation—indeed a summons—to dinner with the Very Great Personage the next evening.

The fact was that his name had been spotted in the Callers' Book, and the Junior A.D.C., whose word in such matters is law, had ordained that he must be appropriately *fêted*.

So the next evening Mr. McCabe made his appearance in exalted circles, and entertained his host for the greater part of dinner with a disquisition on the important question of the lateral extension of the wheat-growing belt in Western Canada. To all of which the Personage listened with the greatest politeness, being paid a matter of 200,000 rupees a month for that very purpose. After dinner, however, he showed the utmost adroitness in passing his informant on to the General Officer Commanding the Division.

The latter succeeded in evading the wheat-growing belt, and began to ask the usual polite questions that all visitors are asked about the sights of the city.

The ex-Premier suddenly remembered that he was a man with a grievance, and lost no time in pouring out the story of his experiences in the Fort.

'And the fellow,' he said, 'positively had the cheek to threaten to call in his Orderly and have me thrown out of the place.'

The General, who had quite a good sense of humour when he had dined well, glanced discreetly at his companion and suppressed a chuckle.

The sequel, however, is a warning against excellent dinners and the frame of mind that they are apt to induce in middle-aged warriors.

Before he knew where he was the General had offered to escort Mr. McCabe round the Fort and Palace the next morning. 'And, by Jove, when we've done that I'll run you into the Station Staff Office and give you a pukka introduction.' Thereupon the Personage, having caught the tail-end of the conversation, and feeling perhaps that the *fêting* had not been adequately performed, insisted on making one of the party. The General, he thought, could talk

to Mr. McCabe about Canadian crops all the way there and back, and he himself, on arrival at the Palace, would give a brilliant little *résumé* of its histories and attractions. So a rendezvous was arranged in the Palace Gardens for the next morning at eleven; the Personage would motor there with a few members of his household and meet the General, who would have picked up Mr. McCabe at his hotel.

The next day all befel at first as had been arranged; and Mr. McCabe and the General motored into the Fort at twenty minutes to eleven.

Now, if the General had one little fault it was a tendency to try and 'work things in together.' If he had to go to a place to hold an inspection he would run it in with a shoot or a picnic or a week-end visit. Similarly, when he was frankly taking a holiday, he would try and get through any little outstanding jobs in the neighbourhood. No one had the least idea when he was going to appear next, or what he was going to do when he appeared. If a battalion was training on the Maidan, he would spring up from nowhere and rush the nearest platoon into the firing line. The Westshires had nearly shot him at their last Field Firing, and when everybody thought he was on leave at Lahore he had been surprised one dark night crawling along one of their fire trenches on hands and knees. He never went out shooting or hunting without working some little scheme for his command, and he never visited a friend in his area without conducting a surprise inspection of the local garrison. He called it 'killing two birds with one stone,' but his subordinates called it something quite different. Further, he played fives every morning with one of his A.D.C.s and kept as fit as the youngest subaltern in the Division.

As the motor sped through the Lahore Gate of the Fort to the clash of the 'Present' and the flare of the bugle, it occurred to the General that he had exactly twenty minutes to waste before the arrival of the Personage.

He also suddenly remembered that there was a prisoner in the Fort. The temptation was quite irresistible.

'By Jove,' he said, turning to McCabe, and using a formula well known to and dreaded by his friends. 'There's a little job I want to put in here. You don't mind, do you? It won't take me more than five minutes, and we've heaps of time.' Mr. McCabe, who had been telling the Général all the things about wheat that he had forgotten to tell the Personage last night, nodded a little

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abstractedly and went on to give his views on the subject of the annual contributions from the Dominion to the State Parliament. It was quite the best morning he had spent in India. So the motor, instead of halting at the Palace gates, turned to the left and drew up at the business end of the Fort, near the S.S.O.'s office and the cells.

It is at this point that the Prisoner enters the story.

It so happened that the arrival of the General's car coincided with his morning ablutions in front of the pump. These were of a most elaborate character, involving a great deal of prayer and unrobing under the noses of two sentries with fixed bayonets.

Now the Prisoner was so far a desperate character that he had already in preparation a plan of escape. Twenty yards behind the pump lay a passage between the cells and the guard-room, leading into the garden of the S.S.O.'s bungalow, situated just behind the cells. Once he could gain the cover of the passage he would have a moment's respite, and once he got into the garden there were trees and bushes and hedges which would assist his flight. At the further end was a gate on the right, giving on to the Historical Gardens, and at the far side of the Historical Gardens there was a place where the ground ran up, and there was only a twelve foot drop from the wall.

The plan was that he should seize a favourable opportunity while he was being led out for exercise or washing, make a bolt for it, and trust to the cover of trees and bushes to screen him from the fire of the sentries.

Once out of the Fort, he would make his way across 200 yards of fairly open ground to the house of a friend who lived in the labyrinth of native houses close to the wall, and who had been corresponding with him on the subject by means of notes hidden in chupatties. Here he would find an excellent temporary hiding-place. It was of course a very desperate plan, but then the Prisoner was a very desperate character, and had no illusions as to the result of his coming trial. In fact the scheme had almost reached fruition, and only an opportunity was awaited.

Now the Prisoner, though in some ways as wise as a serpent, was in others as innocent as a dove. Someone somewhere sometime had imparted to him a piece of information which had remained imbedded in his memory. It was to the effect that when you were 'taken' (an end that usually overtook his friends eventually), the real danger came not from the 'Polis' who effected the capture,



nor yet from the 'lal kurti' who kept watch and ward, but from a certain great civilian sahib in sober raiment who passed judgment on you and ordered you away to execution. So to the fevered fancy of the Prisoner, the arrival of so imposing and judicial a presence as that of Mr. McCabe, accompanied by one of the great ones of the army, seemed to indicate the beginning of the end.

Would he not now be at once removed to the place of judgment, and so would not Sunder Singh await him in vain in his little house below the Fort wall?

The General approached one of the sentries and was questioning him about his duties. The other sentry was trying to look straight in front of him, and also to see what the General looked like, a process that did not conduce to great vigilance.

'And what are you going to do, my man,' said the General, 'if the Prisoner'—there was a scuffle of feet, a flying streak of white, and the Prisoner had darted into and down the passage leading to the S.S.O.'s garden.

For the fraction of a second the sentries were too bewildered to do anything. Then they waved their rifles and started in pursuit.

Prompter by far was the General. Not for nothing did he play fives with A.D.C.s at six o'clock in the morning, and rush stray platoons into the firing line during practice attacks. There was a fleeting vision of scudding khaki, and before the sentries had got off the mark at all, the General had vanished down the passage in pursuit.

The chase was now fairly started. A subaltern was instructing a sleepy squad in the mysteries of cones of fire at the lee of the guardroom.

The Prisoner sped past, hotly pursued by the General, and the Musketry squad broke irretrievably and pounded in their wake. The little Sergeant in charge of the Prisoner had been doing a job in the rear of the cells and emerged just in time to make a good third to the General's second.

A Sanitary Policeman and a Lamp Orderly appeared from the back of nowhere, and a fireboy just outside the cookhouse dropped a heavy ration bag and fled after the rout. The S.S.O.'s mali, who had been pretending to weed the garden, gave one blood-curdling yell and stampeded into the Historical Gardens under the impression that his sins had found him out and that retribution was at hand.

All this happened with such startling rapidity that Mr. McCabe was left standing alone in front of the empty cell, staring after the vanishing form of his guide. A few seconds before he had been having a very interesting conversation with a distinguished General on an important constitutional point, and now it seemed as if everybody had suddenly gone quite mad.

He had already grasped the fact that there are more things in the Empire of India than are contained in the philosophy of Western Canada. But this last completely stumped him.

Even as he watched the fireboy sped by, and then—the fever of the chase leapt in his veins, some backwoods ancestral instinct stirred into life, and with a Gargantuan guffaw he turned and cantered heavily down the passage in pursuit.

At this point the Station Staff Officer entered the scene to his undoing. Aroused by a noise of great shouting he emerged from his office, which was situated exactly opposite the cells and about eighty yards away.

There met his astonished gaze the spectacle of the empty cells, no sentries and no Prisoner. In the foreground stood a desperate character, a German-American conspirator, who, even as he watched, broke into demoniac laughter and disappeared down the passage leading to his bungalow.

The S.S.O. was a man of action, and nothing at the moment seemed clearer than that the German spy, having effected the release of the Prisoner, was now making good his own escape, with perhaps an incidental attempt at arson on the S.S.O.'s bungalow.

Five seconds later he was making excellent time down the passage, while after him sped a company cook and a stray lance-corporal, whom he had, so to speak, taken in his stride.

Meanwhile, in the Historical Gardens the hunt roared merrily forward.

The Prisoner, with a lead of ten paces, was making a bee-line for the further side; after him sprinted the General, closely attended by the little Sergeant and the Subaltern. The General ran with grim determination, the Sergeant, having spent the previous evening convivially at the Mess, was finding the pace a little trying, while the Subaltern, being very young, rent the air with excited whoops. Next followed the two sentries who had lost ground owing to their vain attempts to turn their rifles on to the Prisoner without shooting the General. Then came the main body of

the field, consisting of the Musketry squad, the Sanitary Policeman and the fireboy.

Behind them lumbered the gigantic form of Mr. McCabe, a heaving, roaring, leaping mass, negotiating with marvellous agility the open drains with which the Moguls had irrigated their garden, and quite unconscious of the avenging fury that sped on his tracks. From time to time his frame shook with monosyllabic explosions, and fragments of sentences hurtled through the air. 'Calgary—cinematograph—same show—film—lunatics—collar him.'

But at every stride he lost just a little ground to the Station Staff Officer who ran with the determination of a man possessed.

Out on the right flank a red herring had been drawn across the trail by the S.S.O.'s mali, who, making for cover like a startled rabbit, was spotted by the Curator of the Historical Buildings; the latter did not in the least realise what was happening, but here at any rate was a desecrator of his flower beds. So he hurled himself in pursuit.

What wonder that the men came out on to the high verandahs behind their bungalows, or that cheers volleyed across the garden like bursts of rapid fire?

In fact it was in every way most unlucky that at this very moment the Personage, his daughter, his daughter's governess, and his A.D.C. should have been drawing near to the Pearl Mosque, which stretches across the garden and concealed from view the stirring scene.

The Personage, in fact, had been nearly as punctual as the General, and not having a little job to put in, had led his party straight into the gardens.

It was a perfect morning; the flower beds blazed with colour, and the white marble of the Palace buildings shone with dazzling brilliance against the cool grass of the lawns.

A faint noise of shouting was wafted over the roof of the little mosque. The Personage smiled benignantly.

'What excellent spirits Thomas Atkins has!' he commented.

His daughter's governess smiled gently, for was she not even now at work on her thirty-seventh pair of mittens, and had she not slipped a little encouraging message into each one?

'Now you will notice,' went on the Personage, 'that the Mota Musjid, like the Taj at Agra, has a false dome, for which it is often criticised by—Why, bless my soul, it really sounds as if the men had got into the garden. That surely ought not to be.' The

party were nearing the corner of the mosque, and the whoop of the Subaltern blended with the roar of Mr. McCabe.

The daughter's governess gave a faint shriek.

The daughter said, 'Oh, papa, what are all these men running for? Oh, what fun!'

But the Personage began using the most un-Personage-like language. For round the fatal corner the party came full on a perfect pandemonium.

Heading in their direction was a palpably terrified and very dishevelled native, pursued at an interval of five paces by one of the rising hopes of the Indian General Staff. Looming amid a mixed crowd in the rear was his guest of last night, the late Prime Minister of a British Colony, leaping across the open drains like a gigantic satyr, and shouting incoherent exhortations to the rest of the chase. In fact, catching sight of the Personage, he roared an inarticulate injunction to him to head the quarry off.

Even as he did so the avenging fury fell upon him; he caught his foot on the edge of one of the Mogul's three-foot deep drains and with a yell of alarm plunged from the Personage's sight.

Like a hawk swooping upon its prey, the S.S.O. leapt on top, and a hideous, though fortunately half-hidden, struggle began.

Simultaneously the main action had ended as rapidly as it had begun. The Prisoner, bewildered by the sudden appearance of the party in front, had attempted to swerve. As far as he was concerned that was the finish. The General, who by virtue of his matutinal game of fives had succeeded in keeping a good length ahead of the Subaltern and the Sergeant, shot through the air like a bolt and bore him heavily to the ground almost at the Personage's feet.

Things, as the junior Major of the Westshires observed that evening in Mess, had 'come to a pretty pass.' To the indignant eye of the Personage two things were perfectly clear. In the first place a distinguished General was violently assaulting a native, a member of that class whose interests he was in the habit of proclaiming were dearer to him than anything else on earth. Further, he was committing this assault right under his—the Personage's—semi-royal nose, and in front of an audience of excited soldiery, to whom the example of their General could not fail to prove fatal.

Fifty yards in rear a scarcely less indecent scene was being enacted. The Prime Minister of a British Colony, a late guest

of his own, was firmly wedged in an open drain, one massive leg signalling desperately for assistance, while its owner, emitting the most blood-curdling howls, was apparently engaged in a life-and-death struggle with someone whom he dimly recognised as the Station Staff Officer.

He further noticed vaguely in the background that another native was in process of being chastised by the Curator of the Historical Buildings.

It was as though there was an infamous conspiracy to insult him. This is to be emphasised, since there is a scandalous rumour abroad (started by the Subaltern) that for a moment it had been an open question whether the Personage would join in the chase.

Certainly his daughter was heard to remark, 'Oh, papa, what fun!' But on the other hand, his daughter's governess, who was very genteel, had betrayed the utmost agitation and even shown signs of a ladylike form of hysteria.

At any rate the Personage's manner was anything but sympathetic. Not for a moment could he countenance these wanton attacks by the military on the native and civil population.

A few cold words, and an abashed and breathless General relinquished his hold and allowed the Prisoner to be led off by the sentries.

A few quick steps and he had reached the scene of the second action.

The whole was involved in a cloud of dust and shouting. Mr. McCabe had succeeded in freeing an arm as well as a leg, and hoisted by this leverage, the S.S.O. rocked and tossed like a buoy in an Atlantic swell.

Strange and horrible sounds emerged from the *mêlée* and blended with the encouraging shouts of the spectators, whose feelings were entirely on the side of the officer, though a sportsmanlike instinct withheld their assistance.

'Stick him with a bayonet!' the S.S.O. was crying to an imaginary sentry. 'Go on! Give him three inches if he doesn't stop struggling. Ah, would you!'

A volley of transatlantic oaths proceeded from the recesses of the drain.

Then it is recorded that the Very Great Personage, losing, for the first and only time in an immaculate career, every vestige of self-control, grasped the Station Staff Officer by the collar.

'How dare you, sir! Come off at once.'

The Station Staff Officer struggled in his grasp. To his inflamed imagination the Fort was teeming with spies.

'Let go, will you, you scoundrel, or I'll——'

Precisely what outrage he would have committed on the sacred body of the Personage is best left to the imagination; fortunately at that moment the General, having recovered his breath, came to the rescue, and succeeded in detaching a very ruffled and disconcerted officer from a dangerous predicament.

Mr. McCabe crawled gingerly from his retreat and sat on the grass almost, but not quite, speechless with indignation.

'Ruffian! Spoilt it all! Pushed me into the drain! Came up behind! Not fair! I'll have him for assault!'

The Personage turned on his heel and swept off the scene. The whole affair was most graphically described by the Personage's daughter's governess in her letter next mail to her dearest friend.

'Such a scene as it was! There was the General running after natives like a great schoolboy and jumping on them, and poor Mr. McCabe sitting in a drain with a terrible man on the top of him. And, my dear, the dreadful, dreadful language! I tried to distract my poor Ruby's attention, but what *could* one do? And all this right in front of his Excellency, and at *eleven o'clock* in the *morning* too!'

Little remains to be told.

The Personage went back to lunch under the firm impression that the whole affair was a put-up job to insult him. In this belief he continues to this day. Incidentally, he snubbed the junior A.D.C. no less than five times on the way home, and has never since made a personally conducted tour of the Fort.

The General Commanding the Division is still a marked man. He has retired to the obscurity of Simla, has developed a double chin, and plays Auction Bridge into the small hours instead of fives at six o'clock. He spends the whole day writing explanations to the Personage who never reads them.

The Station Staff Officer returned shortly afterwards to his regiment, where he became a man with a past and an unreasoning hatred of all things Canadian.

The sentries spent a week in barracks, and subsequently had a very good time in the canteen giving their version of the affair.

The Prisoner himself was tried and subsequently hanged within a few days of the occurrence.

As for Mr. McCabe, he was nearly as angry as the Viceroy, and

quite as much at a loss. *His* case was that he was really spending a very jolly morning when a miserable, mad, jack-in-office of a soldier, who had on a previous occasion grossly insulted him, had assaulted and pushed him down a drain.

He had done this with many bloodthirsty threats, in the presence of the Personage, and to the accompaniment of loud cheers from the onlookers. Therefore was he, Joshua McCabe, ex-Premier of a great Colony, determined to have blood. But as the Personage resolutely refused to discuss the affair at all, or even to grant him a personal interview, and as the General was not at home for a full fortnight, and the Sentry at the Fort had special orders from the S.S.O. on no account to admit him, his desire for blood perforce lacked gratification. So he was reduced to cabling a long and highly coloured version of the affair to the Press of his Province; wherefrom appeared a most eloquent article with appropriate headlines which eventually found its way on to the floor of the House of Commons, where it did a great deal of mischief, to the infinite discomfort of the Great Personage.

So the Event was very Untoward indeed.

J. GILBERT.



‘THE FATHER OF THE R.A.M.C.’

On an afternoon of August 1870 a young assistant surgeon in the barracks of his regiment, the 4th Dragoon Guards, then stationed at Northampton, was handed a telegram with the words ‘Are you prepared to serve with a Red Cross Ambulance in France?’

Why his name was among those selected for this chance of service he never knew; he only knew that the Germans had, after severe fighting with the French, closely invested Metz, and that to him had come a golden opportunity for observing the working of the Medical Service of an Army in the field.

The earliest train next morning saw him on his way to report himself at the War Office, and a few hours later he found himself at the First Depot of the Red Cross Society ever formed in England, a small room on the ground floor of a house opposite St. Martin’s Church near the corner of Trafalgar Square, where Colonel Lloyd-Lindsay and a small committee were beginning to collect funds for the work before them, which afterwards amounted to £250,000.

Here Assistant-Surgeon Sandford Moore was examined as to his proficiency in both French and German, for the work of the Red Cross was conceived as international, and the Ambulance about to be sent out was to be used for either army indifferently. For him it was a veritable break into the unknown, and the vagueness of the task before the twelve English surgeons may be gauged from the fact that at that time no regulations existed in the English Army for the removal of the wounded from the firing-line, and such a unit as a bearer company had no existence either in fact or even on paper. Therefore the English Ambulance, so called, was a conglomeration of personnel and *matériel*, without any organisation of any kind, and as such was embarked at Woolwich early in October on board the steamer *John Bull*.

At Havre the Red Cross representatives had collected horses and drivers for the wagons. These drivers were French sailors and dockyard hands, utterly unfamiliar with the care and management of horses; so the first duty of the English surgeons was to instruct these rather hopeless pupils in the arts of sticking on to and driving the horses, and for some days they did nothing but harness horses, while their only surgical practice consisted in

attending to bruises, bites, and cuts on the unfortunate men. In ten days' time, with the true British genius of 'muddle through,' the Red Cross Ambulance left Havre, escorted to the station by the Mayor and the citizens, the streets beflagged and with the usual conclusion to such a ceremony by the presentation of an address.

By this time, so rapid was their advance, the Germans had cut the line between Rouen and St. Germain; and the latter being the destination of the Ambulance, they had to detrain at Rouen, and commence their march through the orchard country of Normandy. The Germans were then encircling Paris, and before the end of the second day's march they had met the Uhlan outposts, who examined the passport of the Principal Medical Officer and subjected them to a close inspection, especially in the case of their French drivers. In the end they were allowed to pass on to St. Germain, where they proceeded to establish a Base Hospital of 200 beds with the equipment that they had brought from England. This was soon in working order and filled with German wounded, but the destiny which had brought the young assistant-surgeon from his cavalry regiment to serve with the only English Ambulance sent to France again intervened. The German authorities commandeered the hospital, the transport, and the *personnel*, distributing the latter in four divisions, three to their base hospitals round Paris and the fourth to the 11th Army Corps. It was to this section that Sandford Moore was attached, and as they remained a component part of the 11th Army Corps throughout the operations to the west and south of Paris during the severe winter of 1870-71, here was a unique opportunity for studying the organisation for removing the wounded from the firing-line.

This was carried out very promptly by the combination of two methods—by regimental stretcher-bearers, four men from each company, who went into action with the regiment, and acted as such only when the wounded were too numerous for the bearer company to attend to—and by Bearer Companies ('Sanitäts Detachement'), three of which were attached to an Army Corps, one to each Infantry Division, and one in reserve. The Bearer Company was a distinct unit comprising 2 lieutenants of the Military Train in command, 7 surgeons and 150 rank and file, including 4 buglers, with 6 ambulance wagons, 4 store wagons, and 42 stretchers and wheeled stretcher supports.

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The one blot on this organisation was, however, the friction that was constantly taking place from the divided responsibility between the surgeons and the combatant officers in command.

The Bearer Company marched immediately in rear of the division to which it was attached, the men in front in column of fours, followed by the wagons. On coming into action the company was halted just out of range of rifle fire, and if possible, in a sheltered position, wagons turned with the horses facing in the direction of the dressing-station, the stretcher-bearers sent forward to pick up the wounded, who were quickly brought to the place where the wagons were halted ('Sammel Platz'), wagons with wounded sent further to the rear, to where the first Dressing Station ('Verbind Platz') had been meanwhile established, returning after the wounded had been placed in position for more wounded to the front, and so on, repeating the process until all the wounded had been brought to the dressing station, or sent further to the rear to the Field Hospital ('Feld Lazarett') either in ambulance wagons or country carts as the case might be.

The fourth division of the English Ambulance joined the 11th Army Corps at Chartres, and accompanied it in driving back the division of French marines from Brest, who were attempting to relieve Paris, and subsequently in the advance to Orleans, which was then held by General Aurelle de Paladines with 70,000 mobiles, and in the consequent rout of that army along both banks of the Loire as far as Blois. The river was frozen and the ground covered with snow for many weeks, so that great hardships were endured by the wounded in evacuating them to the rear owing to the lack of ambulance wagons. They had to be conveyed on country carts, lying on straw and covered in many instances with only a single blanket, and thus exposed to the severe weather were often frost-bitten on their journey back to Chartres or Orleans.

The English Ambulance was nominally rationed by the German Commissariat with meat, *pumpernickel*, and *erbswurst*, not by any means appetising, even when such was forthcoming, for often no rations were served out to the troops. The ambulance was billeted with the infantry in villages, for tents did not form part of the German equipment.

During the campaign the mortality of the wounded was very high, owing to pyæmia and hospital gangrene, as antiseptic dressings were then unknown and were not introduced into surgical practice for many years afterwards. The defects in the English ambulance

wagons and stretchers of the regulation pattern used in the British Army and not previously tried in warfare became apparent, and these were brought to notice on Sandford Moore's return to London in his 'Notes with a Prussian Bearer Company in the Loire Campaign 1870-1871.'

In March 1871 an armistice was proclaimed, eight months having been then sufficient to lay an unprepared and divided France at the feet of Germany, but those eight months of invaluable experience were not lost to our young assistant-surgeon. His resolve was taken that the English Army should have an organisation for removing the wounded, and that it should be better than that of the Germans. that is to say one without division of responsibility, and that the surgeons should be given command of the men, whom they had trained and for whose movements in the field they were responsible. The coherence and *esprit de corps* of a united service were essential preliminaries to the solution of the problem.

Sandford Moore was under no illusions as to the character and intentions of the Prussians; indeed in their triumph they made no secret of their purpose. 'We are coming to you next, Herr Englander,' they would shout across a restaurant, and occasionally when they mistook him for a Frenchman they tried more personal insolence. 'Shut the door, you swine,' they would call, but the door was not shut, and for the time seeing that he was English and stubborn they changed their tune.

But when he came home it was to prepare not for the war that might come but for the war that must come. The next two years were spent with his regiment apparently uselessly, but a man with a purpose wastes nothing that can help. Surgeon Moore amid the chaff of the Mess went out into the barrack square with the recruits and learnt his drill with them.

It was not, however, until 1874 that Sandford Moore was in a position to begin to work it all out. On his return from the Ashanti Campaign under Wolseley in that year, as a reward for his services he was appointed Instructor of the Army Hospital Corps Depot and Training School at Netley. By his advice both were removed to Aldershot, where they have been quartered ever since.

Here, then, was his opportunity for beginning at the beginning and putting his ideas into practice, but this chance and all the subsequent steps were rendered possible by one controlling circumstance—the unhesitating confidence of Sir William Muir, the Director General of the Medical Department. Like all great men he knew

whom to trust, and his confidence once given he never wavered. In all the long uphill struggle that followed he was never appealed to in vain, and his influence backed the young reformer through all his difficulties.

The Medical Service at this time consisted of two departments—the Army Hospital Corps and the Army Medical Department, which had been formed in 1873 on the abolition of the regimental medical service—a change acceptable neither to the army generally nor to the medical officers themselves, who though always powerful were poorly endowed with official authority, unused to command, and without knowledge of drill or interior economy. The drill and systematic ambulance instruction of the corps presented no difficulty, but how were the officers of the department, in number about 1500, to be trained? This was accomplished in the first place by bringing young officers on the completion of the course at the Army Medical School to the depot for drill and equitation, and to be brought under discipline; then senior officers were invited to undergo the course of training, and in batches did so, so that gradually many senior officers were trained with the men, and in this way the honourable relationship between officers and men, which is the true basis of *esprit de corps*, was begun.

Concurrently with the training of the officers and of the men of the Army Hospital Corps at the depot the instruction of regimental stretcher-bearers was commenced, two men per company of each regiment stationed at Aldershot, and this has been the means of forming an important auxiliary to the bearer companies on active service. The ambulance training was greatly facilitated by the publication of 'The Manual for Training Stretcher-Bearers and Bearer Companies,' compiled by Sandford Moore and issued as a War Office manual.

In 1877 an important landmark on the road of progress was fixed when the medical officers were given by Royal Warrant the command of the men in the corps, the patients in military hospitals and others attached thereto.

Sandford Moore was in 1878 promoted to the rank of Surgeon-Major and in that year became Commandant of the Depot and Training School, an appointment held for the first time by an officer of that rank. He now set to work to instruct the officers attending the course of training in Military Law, discipline, and interior economy of the corps, and as the corps was directed to take part in all Divisional Field Days and to march past, both officers and

men were trained to do so. He was the first medical officer to command his men marching past, which he did with the officers wearing scarlet and the men blue, a distinction in dress that was not put an end to until twenty years later.

A test of the methods adopted in training the men was given by the successful instruction of 39 medical officers and 700 militia reserve men, who were brought to the depot during the mobilisation of 1878. They were divided into six companies and remained at the depot for two months, where they were clothed, equipped, rationed, drilled, and commanded by medical officers, and finally marched past the Duke of Cambridge, who gave his unqualified approval.

As many batches of officers continued to arrive at the depot the question of a Mess establishment had soon to be faced, and this step met with very considerable opposition, owing to the vested interests involved, such as loss of staff allowances for senior officers &c. The local authorities, on due search being made, could discover no suitable buildings, but on the receipt of a peremptory order from the War Office the block of Officers' Quarters in the West Infantry Barracks were handed over for the purpose.

The establishment of a Mess may appear to the lay mind as a trivial matter in the evolution of a corps, but from the disciplinary and social point of view it was of the first importance. It took these young surgeons from the relaxed social and moral atmosphere of the scattered lodgings and small hotels frequented by them and began to establish among them a real *esprit de corps*.

Within a fortnight from the time that they were given over these quarters Sandford Moore and a few brother officers had raised among themselves £400 in order to purchase the necessary linen, cutlery, glass, and kitchen utensils, the Government supplying only the bare furniture. The aim of these friends was to start the Mess in full working order before the next batch of young officers arrived, so, on any evening during that eventful fortnight, the sight might have been seen of the medical officers endeavouring to turn privates of the Army Hospital Corps into efficient Mess waiters by demonstration lessons at the table with empty plates and dummy dishes. On the night when the batch arrived the opening dinner was given in perfect order, and even the bugler was in his place to sound the Mess and Regimental Call. As time went on permanent quarters were assigned to the Army Medical



Department Mess, and they have since become the Headquarters Mess of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

During his stay at the depot from 1875 to 1881 Sandford Moore lost no opportunity of bringing before the public the urgent necessity of organising the medical service as a corps, and to this end he lectured frequently at the United Service Institution and at the Headquarters of the Honourable Artillery Company. He was also selected by the Order of St. John of Jerusalem to be a member of the original Central Executive Committee of the Ambulance Association of the order, which sat for the first time at Sir Edmund Lechmere's house in Mayfair in 1876, where his experience as Instructor of the Army Hospital Corps was fully appreciated.

It was in connection with this committee that he first met Miss Florence Nightingale, who fully recognised the value of his great idea, and seeing what it would all mean to her wounded, wrote him after he had gone blind, through overstrain of work in 1886 :

'I learnt with the greatest grief and sympathy that you have lost the eyesight of which you made so good an use. We all lament your retirement from the service, and we all thank you for the good you have done us, and which will be carried on by so many you have trained. But this is not all, nothing will make me believe that your activity will be lessened by this great disaster of blindness. Rather will it set itself to work to devise fresh means, independent of eyesight, to do us good. Mr. Fawcett was an example of a man who did this and who was more active for good even after than before he became blind. . . . I wish I could give you one of my poor eyes, but they would be of little use to you ; they are waxing old, and painful from overwork, though I still get service out of them.'

In the years following his severance from the service that he loved so well Sandford Moore never lost touch with his old comrades and pupils, who carried on his work, step by step, through years of difficulty and struggle until the evolution of the Royal Army Medical Corps was finally completed by the amalgamation of the Army Medical Department and the Army Hospital Corps before the South African War, when full responsibility was given to the officers of the R.A.M.C.

How nobly that responsibility and trust has been responded to the Great War has proved, and to none is the nation's gratitude more due than to her Army doctors. That they had the power to serve her as they have done is due to the clear foresight of the



young assistant-surgeon who served on England's first Red Cross Ambulance in the Franco-German War of 1871. He has been stone blind now for over thirty years, but he has reaped a good reward in a letter from an old friend in 1909, saying :

'Last night was a record dinner of the R.A.M.C. (The annual dinner of the Corps.) Sir W. Taylor proposed Sir Alfred Keogh's health as it was the last time he will preside as D.G. at the dinner. . . . And he made an admirable reply giving a sketch of his administration. He twice referred to you in the most flattering terms as a pioneer of the present system, and indeed called you the Father of the Corps. I was so delighted to hear him as I know how soon the work of early reformers is forgotten, and it is so nice to be able to tell you that you are remembered. . . .'

His own invincible courage speaks out when he says himself :  
'It is given to very few reformers to see the reward of their own work. Very few have had what I had.'

ELEONORA GIBBON.

## MEMORIES OF A MARINE.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE ASTON, K.C.B.

### II. UP THE STRAITS IN THE EIGHTIES (2).

THE two features of Suakin that I remember best when we landed there in March 1884 are the comfort of the tents and the horror of the flies, which settled in clouds on our food. We had to brush them off each morsel on its way from plate to mouth. The navy had pitched a camp for us, and the tents were Indian, of the E. P. (European private) pattern; large square double tents, the outer cover lined with red cotton and the inner with yellow, pole standards and ridge-poles of bamboo, and a door in each side with light bamboo rods to hold up the flap and form a porch. We spent a few days in comfort in these cool tents, and then marched into the desert for our next great adventure, which came very near to disaster. What the real object of the expedition was, we had no idea. We thought that we should ultimately march inland, open up the country, and establish communication with Berber on the Nile, so as to use that route for reinforcing or relieving General Gordon at Khartoum, in the event of his wanting support. We had killed about 2,000 of the local Arab tribesmen at El Teb, and we had relieved the Egyptian garrison at Tokar. We had been told originally that that was the object of the campaign.

At Suakin, as at Trinkitat, all our drinking-water came from condensing ships in the harbour. The local well-water was brackish and unfit for the white man, though the natives drank it freely without harm. We followed the usual plan in desert warfare in those days. We established a depot for supplies and water a day's march from Suakin, and, as soon as enough water had been collected in canvas tanks, we started on our march at once, so as to get to them before their precious contents evaporated. We marched in square, with guns and pack transport on mules and camels in the middle of the square. We had to be ready for attack from any direction at any moment. Cavalry scouts were out, but they could not be pushed very far, and the line of march took us through thorn bush with occasional wide open spaces. We halted in the afternoon, made a zareba (a hedge of thorn bush) around us, and settled down for the night. I remember the fascination when tired out of being saved the tedious process of undressing, and simply lying

down to rest in the soft desert sand, with the blaze of stars overhead and the desert silence, broken only by the occasional grunt or snarl of a camel. We started early the next morning to get some of the march over in the cool hours, halted for a mid-day rest, and after a thirsty afternoon march through a desert quivering with heat, settled down for the second night in another zareba. We strengthened our hedge with all the thorn-bush we could cut before dark, as we gathered that the enemy was somewhere about us. A big convoy with water-tins and supplies came crowding into our zareba soon after dark, and the turmoil of snarling camels and rattling tins left us little chance of sleep until midnight.

About an hour later we were woken by the sound of bullets whistling overhead and pattering on the camel saddles. One bullet went through our major's horse, by which I was sleeping. I also heard for the first time that queer sort of lingering moan familiar to all who have been in night alarms in desert war. The men were lying along the sides of the zareba with sentries every few yards, and heavy firing in the direction of the flashes of the enemy's rifles was at once opened from some parts of the square. There was a scramble for the piled arms, and the thorn hedges were soon manned. There were no further developments that night. The sniping went on for a time, but we managed to get one or two hours' sleep. The next day—March 13—we fought the battle of Tamaai.

We were up before dawn, and I must confess that we did not earn Rudyard Kipling's opinion of the resourcefulness of our corps. We were not fed 'before the bugles blew.' We had been unable to beg, borrow, or steal any proper camp kettles. The ones we had managed to secure were native cooking-pots made of thick metal; they needed a furnace to warm them through properly. Sticks of dry thorn-bush were of little use as fuel, even when reinforced by the empty boxes left unguarded by the general's headquarters, and 'found' by our cooks. The result was that we began our day's work on nothing more sustaining than tepid water and coffee-grits, and some dry biscuit. Even after thirty-five years the events of the next few hours stand out very clearly. We formed the rear face and part of the right face of the square. The 42nd (Black Watch) and 65th (York and Lancaster) formed the other faces. The rear face of a square on the move is the least enviable position. It is no joke. plodding in heavy marching order through dense clouds of dust in tight-fitting blue clothing

attracting the full heat of the sun, especially when your head-covering is unsuitable and uncomfortable. It adds materially to your discomfort when your progress is constantly obstructed by the tail ends of mules, straggling from the mass inside the square, carrying loads of ammunition, water (very little of that), and medical stores. We had left our other supplies behind in the zareba, with a small guard.

When we had marched a short distance we halted, formed up the square ready for action, and lay down for a few minutes' rest. Then we advanced by bugle. The use of bugles to convey orders was universal in those days; bugle-calls preceded every operation, and advertised its nature to any enemy with the most primitive ear for music. As soon as we advanced again, bullets from Remington rifles began to drop amongst us. The enemy's conception of musketry was primitive. The average Hadendowa Arab rested the butt of his rifle on his thigh, with the muzzle at any convenient angle, and then pulled the trigger. A square of men in solid formation, men of the front and rear faces marching shoulder to shoulder and those of the side faces in fours, offers a simple target at a few hundred yards, but most of the bullets hummed harmlessly overhead. The rear face received a small share of them. A medical officer riding on a mule just in front of me was shot, the bullet entering one temple and going out at the other. He put his hands to his head, called out that he was dead, and rolled off his mule. It was a natural mistake on his part; his brain was badly shaken up, and a mess had been made of his eyesight for the time being, but the bystanders only seemed to see the incident from the humorous point of view. It really was rather a wonderful escape; the bullet ran round the skin under his eyebrows without penetrating his skull. Then another bullet hit the butt of the rifle of a young soldier, who gave a little jump afterwards every time one whizzed fairly close overhead. The consoling remark of the old soldier next to him in the ranks who felt the little jerks of his elbow is worth recording: 'All right, Bill! You won't hear the one that hits you!'

A few minutes later the battle began in earnest. We seemed suddenly to have blundered on to the edge of a deep nullah, with steep sides. Another smaller nullah with more gentle slopes and plenty of bush cover ran into the main nullah just to the right of the square. From these nullahs a mass of anything up to 8000 spearmen and swordsmen rushed out. A large body got through

a gap in the right face, swept along the whole of the rear of the front face, killing all the company sergeants and about eighty men (the officers were in front of the line, as the order had been given to charge). It was impossible to shoot inwards at an enemy inside the square, and the men, much hampered by their equipment, had to resort to the *arme blanche* against agile naked spearmen who were experts in its employment. On the right, outside the square, we had a field battery (naval muzzle-loading 9-pr. guns drawn by mules and manned by the R.F.A.) and some naval (Gardner) machine-guns inside the square, where the field battery joined them after firing a few rounds. About a mile away to our right was another brigade square, commanded by Redvers Buller; on our left a squadron of the 10th Hussars, watching the flank.

I will give my own view of events. After a few steady volleys we heard a terrific burst of rifle and machine-gun fire in front. Through the dust and heat haze and screen of mules and transport we saw a few fuzzy heads, and the glint of spear points occasionally appeared over the low scrub. Then a steady stream of transport animals came at us. Then men of all units, mixed up in little mobs plodding steadily to the rear, without panic, but with all organisation and control lost. They came upon us so suddenly that there was no chance of altering our formation, which left no gaps to let the procession through. We were in line in two ranks, and many of our men were soon mixed up with the others in the retreat. In some parts of the line one of our few officers, or an N.C.O., formed what was then called a 'rallying square' of a few men. These 'prepared for cavalry,' which meant forming in clusters with rear ranks standing, and front ranks on the knee, each little human buttress bristling with bayonets. The final stage of what might have been a big disaster was a steady walk to the rear by the whole disorganised mob which, a few minutes before, had been a disciplined brigade. The last men to retire looked over their shoulders and took pot-shots at anything looking like an enemy.

After all organisation was lost I remember the maddening feeling of being unable to regain control. The men seemed dazed, and incapable of grasping any idea but that of walking steadily to the rear. It seemed to be impossible to stop the movement. Once the retreat was stopped, there might be a chance to reform the brigade. Then I learned the value of *esprit de corps* and the old discipline and sense of obedience instilled by barrack-square drill.

The major,<sup>1</sup> whose horse had been shot in the zareba during the night, was the fortunate possessor of a voice like a bull. He roared out an appeal to the Portsmouth men of the Royal Marines to rally round him. At last some men stopped, and, seeing them do so, others followed the example. The advance of the enemy was delayed for the time by cross fire across our front from a squadron of 10th Hussars who had dismounted on our left, and to some extent by the distant fire of the other square on our right. We had leisure to reform, and disaster was averted. Officers gradually took charge and divided up the men in companies, regardless of the corps to which they belonged. We formed a line, one rank in some places, as many as six ranks in others, but all recognising some form of command. Many men of other branches of the service—Highlanders, York and Lancaster men, and bluejackets—were still mixed up in our ranks, but these gradually passed to their own commands, and formed in line on our left. I estimated at the time that we must have fallen back about half a mile.

Then came the order to advance in line, 'the Royal Marines directing,' and retake the ground we had lost. We could see a few of the enemy to our front, and the artillery from our right threw a few shells amongst them. One shell bowled over a triumphant Hadendowa dancing on a captured limber and waving defiance at us. We marched on without incident over the *débris* of the retreat and the Hadendowa and British dead (we found no British wounded alive), until we again were near the nullah. My company was on the extreme right, near the small side-nullah, at the bottom of which was lying one of our lost machine-guns. A very gallant sub-lieutenant in the navy with a party of bluejackets ran down to save it and, as they were dragging it away, they were followed up by a body of spearmen and swordsmen coming up from the main nullah. The men of my company opened fire to protect their shipmates. The other, unbroken square was exactly in the line of fire! We stopped the firing as soon as we could, but the incident nearly ended tragically for myself. A very angry man turned up soon afterwards from the other square with a bullet-hole through one of his horse's ears. He selected me as the object of his wrath, and as there was nothing on him to show that he was an officer I mistook him for a war correspondent and replied in a similar strain, indicating a place hotter than the Suakin desert as his destination. One of our majors came up to see what

<sup>1</sup> Major, afterwards General, G. H. T. Colwell, C.B.

it was all about, and to my dismay called him 'Sir.' The chief of the staff (Colonel Clery)<sup>1</sup> arrived and did the same. The justly annoyed man was Redvers Buller, commander of the other brigade, and I thought that my career in the service was at an end. I was told quietly next day by Colonel Clery that the Powers were quite satisfied with my conduct! Nearly twenty years afterwards, a fellow student at the Staff College dragged up the story with the question 'Who shot Buller's horse?' during a discussion on savage warfare. I did not know till then that the tale had spread in the army.

When we were near the edge of the big nullah we were charged again, but not in great force; many of the Martini-Henry rifles jammed, because, when the mix-up of the brigade organisation occurred, some Gardner ammunition was supplied by mistake. I shall never forget the gallantry of the 'Fuzzies' in that charge, or their wonderful vitality. It took a dense hail of bullets to stop them when once on the move. We—all of us, I think—had the greatest admiration for them, and we would have welcomed some explanation to the lower ranks why we were sent into their country to kill them. Once there, of course, it was a question of their lives or ours. Their leader, Osman Digna, was always referred to in the ranks as Osman Dinghy; he was generally supposed to have betaken himself to the mountains during a battle. Their men's notion of war was embodied in the idea of clean killing. I think various material delights were promised to every man in Paradise if he succeeded in killing a Christian. There was none of the quality of the Prussian who, according to Goethe's saying and to our own experience, is naturally cruel. 'Civilisation,' Goethe added, 'will make him a savage.' It has. Compared with the Prussian, I should be sorry to call the Hadendowa Arab of those days a savage, but we had a horror of the ways of his women-kind. They hid in the bushes with short knives of unpleasant form, to despatch and mutilate any enemy who fell into their hands.

The last charge against us from the nullah was stopped by rifle and machine-gun fire before the enemy could get to close quarters. In my immediate front the leading man dropped about thirty yards from our bayonets. He had received four mortal body wounds and one through the head. He still tried to struggle forward to reach us, when no longer able to stand. Then we soon

<sup>1</sup> General Sir C. F. Clery, K.C.B.



saw the enemy going homewards in twos and threes up the other side of the nullah, and the long strain was over. We were nearly choking with thirst, aggravated by the dust and the pungent fumes of powder smoke, but there was no water. Strangely enough, there was plenty of ice for the sick, and we were all given little blocks of it. We found that it was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon.

After taking the precaution of clearing the bush and rocky ground at the bottom of the nullah (my company was used for the purpose, it was rather 'jumpy' work), we went back to the zareba, had our first meal, and slept alongside the long rows of our dead, brought in from the battlefield on pack camels. We buried them in a long trench early the next morning, and then went back to Suakin by a forced march so as to get there before our water supply ran out. It was a terribly thirsty march, especially for men who drank from their water-bottles early in the day, as men will when they have not learned by experience.

The remainder of our time at Suakin calls for little comment. We had another and longer march across the desert to the foot-hills, this time separately by battalions, not densely packed in a square, choking in each other's dust. The distant sound of the pipes of the Highlanders on the march came to us across the desert as a great delight and help on the march. There were rumours that the cavalry were to push across the desert to Berber on the Nile. These reports were contradicted. Soon the newspaper correspondents left us, and we realised that our work was over. Then, with the loss of mental interest, came the scourge of enteric, and the sound of three volleys coming from the cemetery nearly every afternoon. The force was embarked as quickly as possible, and we were nearly the last to leave. I think that our transport must have been used for pilgrim traffic; a party of eighty men, working for two days, only succeeded in cleaning the filth out of the cabins, saloon, and one troop deck; and the holds were still in a disgusting state when we left Suakin for Suez, the Canal, and Malta. Many men went down with enteric during the voyage, and some died. The most satisfactory incident on our way through the Mediterranean was the sight of about four hundred of the objectionable helmets floating in our wake, having been condemned by a board of naval officers as unfit for further use, and thrown overboard with much zeal.

Looking back at memories of the Soudan campaign of 1884, the two that stand out most vividly are that weird sort of moan

that rose from the zareba during the night alarm before Tamaai, and the most exciting event of the next day's battle. When we were advancing in line to retake the lost ground, a startled hare raced across our front; I think that at least a thousand men must have fired at it, and I remember breathless excitement about whether it would escape. It did, apparently untouched.

Many years afterwards it fell to my lot to try in a course of lectures to teach young subalterns their duties on active service. They had to acquire a mass of book knowledge for examination purposes, but I summed up the lessons gathered from my own experience very shortly. (1) Think of your men before you think of yourself. (2) Eat, drink and sleep whenever you get a chance, if you want to stay the course. And (3) Grease your boots. I might have added one more point to the inexperienced. 'Funk' on active service is generally being afraid of being afraid, and the cure for that fear is a job of work and some responsibility, even as the best cure for sea-sickness is to steer the boat. For a few minutes after being woken by the night alarm before Tamaai I was under the impression that I was an abject coward, until my C.O. sent me out all alone into the bullet-swept darkness to investigate a native who had charged towards the zareba when the sniping began, and had apparently fallen dead about sixty yards outside the line. It was quite an effective cure. . . .

The return to our ships in Malta harbour was a very pleasant home-coming. I am afraid that we had little sense of proportion in the services in those days; we were received as heroes after our six weeks' campaign. The captains in the fleet manned a galley and pulled our C.O. across the Grand Harbour, and the flagship's ward-room officers gave a dinner to the officers, at which I think everyone at the table either made a speech or sang a song. We got back just in time for the summer cruise and we visited many interesting parts of the Mediterranean during that and subsequent cruises, of which the notes which follow are not in consecutive order, as I kept no diaries in those days.

Alexandria was interesting, especially the batteries knocked about by the recent bombardment, the luxurious suburb with the irrigated gardens of the rich merchants' houses, and the masses of flowering oleanders. We once carried from Alexandria to Port Said two companies of the Cameron Highlanders, then the most friendly regiment of all others with the navy. We took them to the 'Dutch House' at the entrance to the Canal, where we saw

a good deal of them afterwards. We spent several months at Port Said at one time and another ; it was not a very desirable spot just then. I remember best the coal dust, and the porpoises in the harbour ; picnics in the ward-room skiff to gather rock oysters from the outside of the breakwater ; shooting when the quails came in, and marvelling at the fact that, although they arrived in the last stage of exhaustion and starvation, it seemed to take them only an hour or two to become as fat as butter by feeding in the irrigated cultivated ground east of the Canal ; duck-shooting, or rather lying out for them on the beach and watching them pass along in thousands at sea just out of gunshot—(to our great joy we succeeded in inducing a newly joined and delightful but very gullible doctor to spend a long hot day with a gun in search of 'Bombay ducks' in the desert) ; the wonderful sight of flamingoes rising in white clouds, flashing into pale pink as they turned over the lake in the distance. Those were the pleasing prospects ; man in Port Said in its earlier days provided vileness in abundance. The European quarter abounded in drinking dens, café-chantants with gambling saloons attached, and such like resorts. We gave 'general leave' from the ship there once, and general leave in those days meant paying arrears of pay and sending ashore men who had been boxed up on board their ships for anything up to three months because, for love of drink or for other reasons, they had formed the habit of out-staying their leave when it was granted. Some of them were the best working hands in the ship, but a visit to the shore was generally too much for them, and Port Said abounded in the sellers of fiery fluids of which one glass was enough for the strongest head. On one occasion there was the making of an ugly row. The 'liberty men' had landed early in the afternoon, and I was sent with a sergeant and six of my men as an advanced guard of the naval picket, to keep order. The first thing we saw on landing was a big mob fighting in the main street ; in the middle were two bluejackets with whom the crowd seemed to have some difference of opinion, as they were stripped half naked and covered with blood. The nearest café had been emptied of its contents, chiefly chairs, which were broken up for use as weapons. The effect of a disciplined body of even six men upon the situation was rather interesting ; the obvious thing to do was to get the victims from the mob by orderly methods before their sympathising shipmates found a leader and increased the turmoil. My little picket was standing rigidly 'at ease.' The sergeant, a fine Scotsman

called Mackenzie, who had done well at El Teb and had learned a lesson in handling a confused situation at Tamaai, called out 'T'shun! Right turn! Left wheel! Quick march!' marched straight through the mob, surrounded the two bluejackets, took them to the boat, fell his men in again and stood them solemnly at ease, before the mob seemed to realise what had happened. Things still looked a bit ugly, a few knives were to be seen, and the Governor of Port Said was very excited and feared trouble, so I got together as many 'liberty-men' as possible—there were two or three hundred on shore—and told them that I had orders to send them off to the ships at once, passing the word quietly to some of the choicest spirits 'if I can find you.' In five minutes there was not a man to be seen. The aftermath was an attempt to make of their doings an incident of international importance; the European press was full of accounts—what we have now learned to call 'propaganda'—about a rising of the Egyptians against the British. Port Said was then a sort of sink for the human dregs of the Levant; there were no Egyptians except a few officials and police there.

During one of our cruises along the Syrian coast, a party of fifty-two from the fleet rode from Joppa (where I first saw a turtle swimming in the sea) to Jerusalem. We all rode excepting the Admiral and his secretary, who drove in a carriage and pair—there was no railway in those days. Of that tour the memory stands out of an evening on the Mount of Olives with Jerusalem outlined against the sunset on one side, and on the other the Dead Sea far away, and gleaming bleakly in its deep valley below the level of the Mediterranean. We had some trouble in shaking off our guide, who was anxious that we should spend our few hours in hurrying about seeing sights, instead of in quietly gathering impressions and thinking. One of the sights offered (for a franc) was a view of Adam's skull, warranted genuine.

The Mosque of Omar impressed us with the beauty and grand simplicity of the great dome built on a simple rock, left untouched and impressive. Of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in comparison, the less said the better. We were interested in the Jews' wailing place, and the huge stones of the old wall there. Most of the party rode to Bethlehem the day after we arrived, but as the same horses had to take us back to Joppa (forty miles) the next night, I thought it better to spare mine the extra distance, of about twenty-four miles, as far as I can remember. It was a

little hard, when I went to visit my horse resting and having an extra feed as I hoped, to find that a shipmate had ridden off on him with the party to Bethlehem. The endurance and sure-footedness of the Syrian horses (provided by Thomas Cook & Sons) were rather wonderful. We covered much of the way home, midshipmen leading, riding at a hand-gallop at night over a rocky road, and we rode into Joppa early on a Sunday morning.

Sunday forenoons on board a man-of-war are always impressive, when once you have got over the ordeal of the captain's inspection. The wonderful rolling prose of the prayer for those at sea is best heard on a ship's deck from a speaker whose surplice is fluttering in a sea breeze, and the hymn beginning 'Eternal Father' is best heard in the same setting from hundreds of the deep bass voices of seamen. I think our trip to Jerusalem put all of us better in tune than usual with such impressions that morning.

Afterwards we went to Beirut, but the trip to Baal-Bek and Damascus was beyond the resources of a subaltern's pockets, severely strained by the Jerusalem expedition; my mess bill that month was discharged by the help of a loan from a kind-hearted paymaster, to whom I hereby tender my sincere thanks, if he still lives. No doubt things are different now, but I doubt whether the Great Ones who decided financial questions at the Admiralty in those days were gifted with the precious quality of imagination. Certain moneys, only a few pounds, but a big sum for subalterns trying to live on their pay, which was little more than half that of their ward-room messmates, were granted by circular to all who had been at Suakin after a certain date, a few days before we left that place. We drew the money and spent it; then we were told it was a mistake, and we had to pay up. That meant nearly a whole month's pay lost, and a mess bill to meet; adverse reports and similar terrors, even perhaps courts-martial in aggravated cases, hang over the heads of those who fail to pay their mess bills in the service.

The resulting shortage of money made trips inland out of the question for the remainder of the commission, and sometimes it was tantalising to be near world-famed spots without seeing them, but nevertheless there was much to be seen for nothing, and I look back at those times as a wonderful yachting trip at the country's expense, taken in the company of the very best companions any youth could desire. It seems at this interval like a kaleidoscopic panorama of interesting places and good times spent in them

looking on all the scenes as a play, without gathering any knowledge of the real life of the actors. It would not be difficult even now to write a long account of the different scenes, if I were not afraid of becoming tedious ; perhaps a few notes may be interesting.

Following the coast round from Beirut, we saw Budrum, with its ancient grey castle (that was before it was whitewashed), on which we found some old English arms of the crusaders carved in stone ; Limasol, in Cyprus, and the lovely experience of reaching the pinewoods and snow of Mount Troodos after a stiflingly hot ride on a mule through miles and miles of vineyards stretching up from the sun-baked plain ; on the way back we learned the value of a crupper when riding a mule downhill, I had to tie my saddle to the mule's tail with a pocket handkerchief ; Chesmeh, not far from Smyrna, where we experienced the strange sensation of an earthquake as felt from a ship in harbour ; it was a queer sort of wavy shivering feeling in the deck, lasting about fifteen seconds, and the men, who were out on the yards at sail drill, were called down from aloft, as we did not know what might come next. The British vice-consul, who was visiting us, went through the trying experience of seeing his house rocking, and part of it falling. Then there were long walks ashore over various islands, chasing red-legged partridges without much result from those who had not studied their habits in hot climates in different times of the day ; Salonika, with its big Jewish colony, dating from before the Christian era, when 'a synagogue of the Jews' is mentioned. I met there for the first time the red-haired Jewish type. Then Athens ; the hot dusty drive along a glaring road from the harbour of Phalerum, the Temples of Theseus and Jupiter, and, above all, the Acropolis, seen by moonlight ; Mars Hill (or rather hillock), on which St. Paul stood to explain immortality to the Athenians, who in those days 'spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing' ; the news was evidently too startling at the time for the majority to accept, 'Demetrius the Areopagite and a woman named Damares' being the only named exceptions.

Then Zante, with its curious 'pitch well' bubbling up through water ; Argostoli, where the sea runs into the earth, always in the same direction, turning a water-mill. Missolonghi, with its reminiscences of Byron ; Corfu, with all its beauties of olive groves and dark cypress. In all the Ionian Islands, the old British barracks are still standing, not even a new coat of paint since the



occupation, because inscriptions such as 'W. O. Quarters' still remained over the doors; Avlona Bay, with its excellent little trout stream, whipped during our stay by rods of all sizes from eight feet to eighteen (a little red on the fly was a *sine qua non*, the size did not seem to matter). We had rather an amusing experience there; finding so many keen fishermen in the fleet, the Admiral<sup>1</sup> kindly took us all for a picnic in his yacht and anchored some miles from the bay by the town of Avlona (Valona) so that we could get to a larger river, marked inland on the chart. To reach it we rode on Turkish pack-saddles (the initiated will sympathise) for about eight miles on a blazing hot day, with heat waves striking upwards off the glaring ground. The river looked perfect and very trouty; we spread ourselves at intervals of about fifty yards, put our rods up, and started work. We flogged for an hour with no result, then some thoughtful investigator put his finger in the river and sucked it. The water was strongly impregnated with salts!

Cattaro, Ragusa, Gravosa, Spalato, Pola and Trieste were all visited and enjoyed, and we were *fêted* everywhere. We anchored at Malamocco and spent a day and part of a night in Venice, an experience I must really leave out of the pattern of this kaleidoscope, contenting myself with mentioning the comfort of the cushions of the gondolas, which I had always thought to be gaily coloured, and was surprised to find so like graceful floating hearses. Perhaps I may also mention the outstanding features of a crowded day, which I hope will not shock lovers of the Queen of the Seas; Venice is no place for tourists. An excellent fried sole for breakfast at Danieli's Hotel; surprise at finding the Bridge of Sighs so much like a photograph; marvel at the skill of our gondolier in avoiding collisions by fractions of an inch in the narrow canals; the Piazza pigeons, and then going from the glare of the sun into the interior of St. Mark's; the Doge's palace and the prison cell; Salviati's glass factory; an illumination in our honour soon after dark, and a procession of lighted boats on the Grand Canal; fireworks, and their reflections in the still water, and then the blue moonlight of a Venice night. During the commission we also saw Naples, Genoa, Barcelona and many other famous places, spending the winter in Malta, as was the custom in those days.

I have written little about ship incidents for reasons I have given. Marine officers took little or no part in the work of the ship, but perhaps some notes of a looker-on may be interesting. The

<sup>1</sup> Lord John Hay.



Nelson sailing tradition was then dying hard, the various revolutions with masts, yards, and sails led to desperate competitions to beat other ships and to make time records ; ten or twelve men were killed by falls from aloft in our ship alone. Then came the Whitehead torpedo, and with it the crinoline of nets spread round battleships ; we had to extemporise, and I shall never forget the maze of ropes and tackles of various sorts on our deck when the nets were out, suspended from immense wooden booms fitted to the ship's side, or the labour and language expended in getting them in and out. There was a wonderful form of protection for the ship against boat attack by night ; we surrounded her with guard boats, well in the line of fire, and then loaded the heavy guns, 10-inch muzzle-loaders, with case shot to fire at the hostile torpedo boats ! Gunnery still took a second place to sail drill ; it did not lend itself in those days to competition, and it was all the gunnery officer could do to get off the prescribed practices. No reliable record was kept of the shooting ; at least I think that our method can be fairly described as unreliable. A cask with a flag on the top, or some similar object, formed the target ; when a round was fired, one midshipman took the distance of the target with his sextant, and another took the distance of the splash of the shot ; if their results, when worked out, showed that the round had gone (say) 300 yards over, it had to be registered as 300 yards over, even if we had plainly seen it strike the water 200 yards short of the target. No wonder there was not much interest taken in the shooting, compared with the sail drill ; ammunition was sometimes thrown overboard if it was not expended within the time grudgingly spared for gun practice from evolutions, paint, and polish.

The last few months were spent in dock in Malta, the crew sleeping in the *Hibernia*, an old wooden hulk, where we could imagine what it was like in the old days in a cabin on the orlop deck. There was more space, and more comfort than I had in the *Alexandra*. I had a large cabin with a big port, instead of a small one with a little scuttle about ten inches across at the end of a four-foot slanting tunnel through the ship's side, and the cog-wheels of a steam steering engine rattling outside the door ; in the *Alexandra's* 'flats' there was an oily atmosphere, and a temperature somewhere over 90°. What we gained in fresh air and accommodation we lost in cockroaches, for which the old *Hibernia* was famed. According to tradition they sat up and barked at you ; they ate much out of a pair of my boots.

While we were hulked in the *Hibernia*, there was some typical international trouble in Crete; the island was under the Turkish flag, though the Turks only held the low country within a few miles of the coast. 'Self-determination on the principle of nationality' had then no force as a working proposition, but the mountaineers saw to it that no Turk who valued his life could venture into their domain. It was thought by the chancelleries of Europe that the presence of a fleet on the coast would alleviate matters, but the Cretans appreciated the situation, as did the Greek press; an Athens paper came out with a cartoon showing Cretans standing on mountains and 'cocking snooks' at battleships riding at anchor off the coast. The lesson of the limitations of battleships as mountain climbers seems still to be difficult to learn, even in these days. In 1915 the War Council told our naval forces to get ready to 'take,' without the help of an army, the extensive Gallipoli peninsula with its strong garrison of Turkish troops.

The Admiral left Malta and hoisted his flag at Suda Bay, and I was transferred to the *Temeraire* with him. After a few weeks the Duke of Edinburgh arrived in the *Tamar* to take over the command of the Mediterranean Fleet from Lord John Hay, who had been appointed First Sea Lord; those were the days when most of the Sea Lords came in and out with the Government. I will not venture to pronounce an opinion upon that as a system; the effect on my own career I propose later to describe. We turned over the *Alexandra* to the new commission, and reached Portsmouth in March 1886, after three years and three months 'up the Straits.'

Only a few words in conclusion. At the end of the commission I received a certificate in writing from the captain that I had conducted myself 'with sobriety.' Every officer serving in the fleet in those days had to be given this assurance, 'should he be worthy of it.' The origin of this practice is lost in obscurity. Unlike the law of the land, it threw upon the officer the onus of proof of his innocence of the crime of drunkenness; I should be sorry to call it a Nelson tradition, and prefer to assume that it originated in the period of naval inactivity that followed the peace of 1815. The captain was good enough to add 'and entirely to my satisfaction. . . . Has tact with men.' Upon what he based that opinion, I do not know, but I can quote as the outstanding 'memory' of all of those days 'up the Straits in the eighties,' the delight in casting aside all books and theories, and the dawn of the idea that living men are more interesting than dead ones;

the joy of handling a small command, of learning the lesson that no two men are alike, and to get the best out of them you must treat each differently ; the joy of feeling a party of men, in which you know every individual, rise to an appeal for a combined effort ; the pleasure of saying 'Come on,' instead of the more detached and really greater responsibility of the more senior officer who has to say 'Go on' ; these are the features of the work of a subaltern on service, and he should make the best of them before the fates exalt him to greater responsibilities with less human interest.

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#### *DEAN BEECHING : A BIBLIOGRAPHY.*

READERS of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE will be interested to know that an annotated bibliography of Dean Beeching's works has been prepared by Mr. G. A. Stephen, F.L.A., the City Librarian, Norwich. The pamphlet in which this is printed as an appendix to Sir Sidney Lee's 'In Memoriam notice of the Dean'—with a portrait—can be obtained from Mr. Stephen at the price of 6*d.* net, post free 7*d.*—THE EDITOR.

